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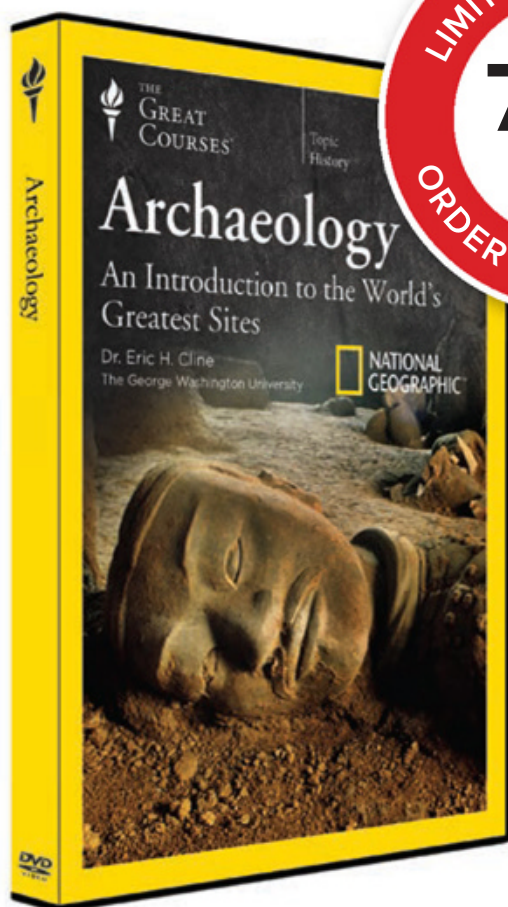
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Tawny-haired and tough, Boudica nearly drove Rome from Britain in the first century A.D., but if it weren't for historians Tacitus and Dio Cassius, we wouldn't know much about her. Women were rarely the focus in Roman works, but Boudica was too big to ignore.

Both Tacitus and Dio Cassius wrote vibrantly, describing her appearance, her deeds, and—most notably—her words. However, their depictions were meant to shock Roman audiences with her “unwomanly” behavior.

In the classical world, men, not women, were the talkers: Historian Mary Beard wrote in 2017's *Women and Power: A Manifesto*, “[P]ublic speaking and oratory were not merely things that ancient women *didn't do*: they were exclusive practices and skills that defined masculinity as a gender . . . Public speech was a—if not *the*—defining attribute of maleness.” Romans would have regarded Boudica's oration as a sign of savagery, not civility.

But Tacitus and Dio Cassius could not have anticipated how their works would be received by future generations. Centuries later the British would revisit their accounts and find inspiration in the ancient queen, defending her homeland from invaders. Unlike other women from the Roman era, Boudica's voice rings loud, clear, and true, bringing new supporters to her cause—the fight against tyranny—with every word.

Amy Briggs
Amy Briggs, Executive Editor



ALMUDENA CUESTA



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MAKING AN ENTRANCE

First-century visitors to Jerash (in modern Jordan) would have found themselves in the city's Oval Plaza, a symbol of Rome's splendor on an eastern border of its empire.

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16 The Myth of the Minotaur

The tale of Theseus and the Minotaur enthralled the people of classical Athens and Rome, but archaeology has revealed the myth's deep roots, which delve further back to the Minoan culture of ancient Crete.

28 Jerash, Oasis City of the East

Remarkably preserved in the desert of Jordan, Jerash bears the marks of many ruling cultures who shaped this ancient city since its traditional founding by a general of Alexander the Great in 331 B.C.

46 Under Boudica's Banner

In A.D. 60 the British queen Boudica, enraged by brutal Roman treatment of her people, led a revolt, sacked London, and nearly expelled Rome from its new province of Britannia.

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A vivid account of his 24-year odyssey to China, Marco Polo's *Travels* transformed medieval maps and whetted European appetites for exotic lands and rich markets.

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After witchcraft became a capital crime in 1563, Scotland endured nearly 200 years of witch-hunting that killed a higher rate of the accused than anywhere else in Europe.

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The face of a 4,500-year-old dog from Scotland has been revealed

by a team of historians and researchers, as part of a study of Stone Age attitudes toward canine companions.

6 PROFILES

The brothers Grimm collected folktales for an academic study.

To their surprise, the tales of Cinderella and Snow White enchanted children and adults alike and became a popular sensation.

12 ENIGMAS

Even after fear of vampires had faded in eastern Europe, ghoulish fascination in the bloodsucking undead lived on in the new genre of vampire fiction, popularized by novels like *Dracula*.

90 DISCOVERIES

High on a rock in Sri Lanka, the fifth-century Sigiriya fortress fell into ruin in the Middle Ages. Later, scholars combed Buddhist chronicles to locate the site and its spectacular Lion Paws gate.



A FRESCO FROM THE FIFTH-CENTURY HILLTOP FORTRESS OF SIGIRIYA, SRI LANKA, POSSIBLY DEPICTING A MEMBER OF THE KING'S HAREM



NG MAPS

SCOTLAND'S Orkney Islands spawned a remarkable Stone Age culture that constructed multichambered stone cairns such as the Cuween Hill tomb where 24 dog skulls were found in 1901. Other key Neolithic sites include Skara Brae and the Tomb of the Eagles.

DOUGH HOUGHTON/ALAMY



FORENSIC MODELING
TECHNIQUES HAVE
RECONSTRUCTED THE FEATURES
OF A DOG WHO LIVED ON THE
ORKNEY ISLANDS IN 2500 B.C.

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT SCOTLAND



FACIAL RECONSTRUCTION

A Dog's Life in Stone Age Scotland

Neolithic dogs were prized companions of Orkney Islanders 4,500 years ago, and new technology reveals what these pups looked like.

Historians in Scotland have reconstructed the face of a 4,500-year-old dog, an animal they believe helped define the identity of a unique Stone Age community.

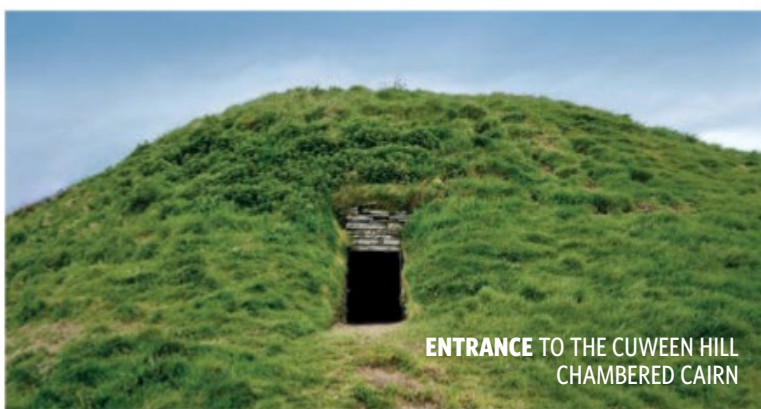
Based on skulls found over a century ago in a Neolithic chamber on Scotland's Orkney Islands, researchers

used modeling techniques to produce a realistic depiction of the dog who may have warmed the hearts and hearths of North Atlantic islanders around 2500 B.C.

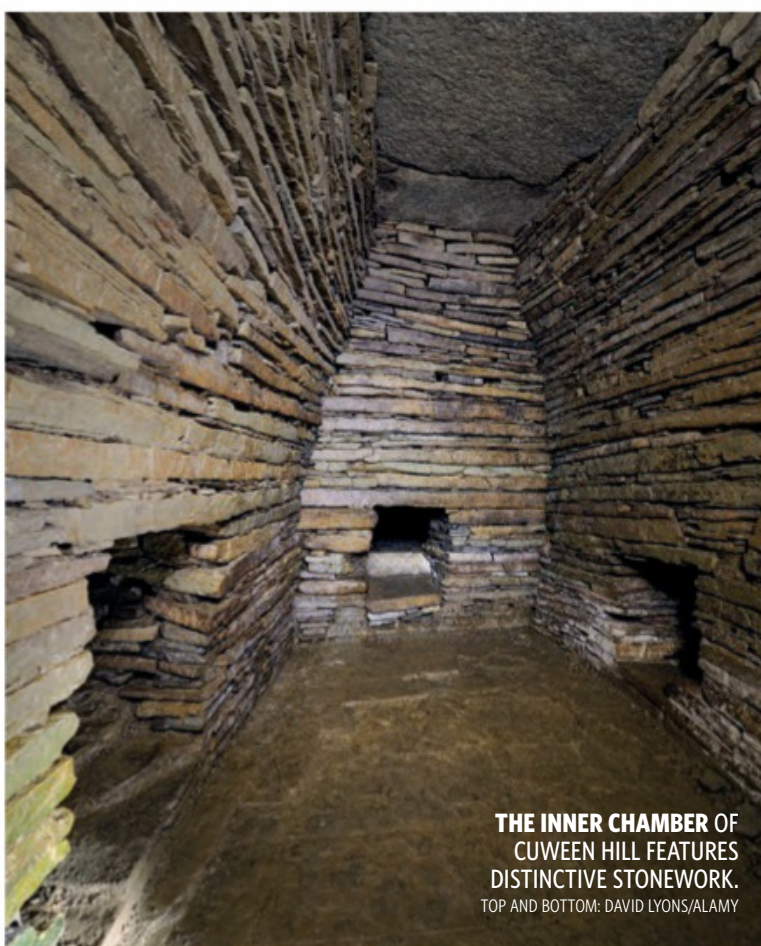
Pet Cemetery

The windswept Orkney archipelago was home to a remarkable Stone Age civilization

located across numerous sites. In 1901 a mysterious mound at Orkney's Cuween Hill was excavated and identified as a Neolithic tomb. Built between 3000 and 2400 B.C., it contains four cells adjoining a central chamber. Along with five human skulls, 24 dog skulls were found inside the complex.



ENTRANCE TO THE CUWEEN HILL CHAMBERED CAIRN



THE INNER CHAMBER OF CUWEEN HILL FEATURES DISTINCTIVE STONEWORK.
TOP AND BOTTOM: DAVID LYONS/ALAMY

Noted for its especially fine stonework, the oldest parts of the Cuween Hill tomb were probably built for human burials around 3000 B.C. The site remained in use for centuries by people in the area. Dogs were not among the original “residents” of the tomb. Carbon dating indicates that they lived around 500 years after the structure was first built.

Using a dog’s skull to create a forensic canine facial reconstruction—believed to be the first ever—was undertaken as a joint project between Historic Environment Scotland (HES) and the National Museum of Scotland.

CT scans and clay modeling techniques were used to reconstruct the dog’s head, which was about the size of a large collie. Although dogs had been domesticated in Europe for thousands of years, the model shows that the Cuween dog still bears striking wolfish features.

Canine Totem

Since their discovery nearly 120 years ago, the dog skulls have long puzzled scholars. “Dogs clearly had an important place in Neolithic Orkney, as they were kept and trained as pets and guards and perhaps used by farmers to help tend sheep,” said Steve Farrar,

WHERE EAGLES DARED

CUWEEN HILL is not the only site in the Orkney Islands where numerous animal remains have been found. On the Island of Rousay, a chambered cairn named the Knowe of Yarso contains the remains of 36 deer deposited alongside human bones. South of Cuween Hill, on the Island of South Ronaldsay, lies the Isbister Chambered Cairn, more commonly known as the Tomb of the Eagles. It was discovered in the 1950s by a local farmer, who stumbled on a small stone chamber in the cliff bordering his fields. On entering the chamber, he discovered, to his astonishment, that it contained about 30 human skulls. Further exploration of the site revealed that among the human remains were the bones of 14 white sea eagles. The birds have been dated to around the same period as the Cuween Hill dogs and, like their canine counterparts, are believed to have had totemic significance for the local community.



THESE BONES CAME FROM WHITE SEA EAGLES AND WERE FOUND IN THE TOMB OF THE EAGLES ON SOUTH RONALDSAY, ORKNEY. THEY DATE TO AROUND 2400 B.C.

LESS GIBBON/ALAMY

interpretation manager at HES. But he also suggested remains of dogs in the tomb indicate that their role in the community went beyond practical concerns. Archaeologist Alison Sheridan of the National Museum of Scotland agreed, suggesting that dogs may have been a kind of totem for the community that lived in the environs of Cuween Hill:

“They may have seen themselves as ‘the dog people,’” Sheridan said.

The presence of dogs in the tomb is reminiscent of other Neolithic sites on Orkney where remains of animals have also been found. Experts from HES also hypothesize that the local Neolithic culture may have held “a belief in an after-life for animals.” ■

RAYCOOPERMAN/GETTY IMAGES

The Brothers Grimm: Fathers of Fairy Tales

In 1812 Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm published an academic collection of German folklore that became the world's most famous anthology of children's stories.

The Story of Their Lives

1785

Jacob Grimm is born in Hanau, near what is today Frankfurt, Germany. His brother Wilhelm is born a year later.

1807

Brothers Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm begin compiling German lore and folktales.

1812

The brothers Grimm publish the first of seven editions of their collection of folktales, *Children's and Household Tales*.

1837

Jacob and Wilhelm are fired from their positions as professors at the University of Göttingen for criticizing King Ernest Augustus of Hanover.

1859

Wilhelm Grimm dies in Berlin. Four years later, Jacob dies in the same city.

Folktales are as old as human civilization itself. A synthesis of the spoken and the scripted, a fusion of different accounts of the same story. The story of Cinderella, for example, appeared in ancient China and in ancient Egypt. Details in the telling change depending on the storyteller's cultural origins. In Egypt, her slippers are red leather, while in the West Indies, breadfruit, not a pumpkin, is the transformative object. The story of Cinderella that appears in Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm's collection of German folktales, first published in 1812, might shock those familiar with today's version of a scullery maid turned princess.

In the brothers Grimm telling, the heroine is called Aschenputtel, and her wishes come true not from the wave of a fairy godmother's wand but from a hazel tree growing on her mother's grave, which she waters with her flowing tears. When the prince comes to find the dainty foot that will match the single slipper (which is gold, not glass), the stepsisters do not shove and shriek but dismember, one cutting off her big toe to try and make the shoe fit, the

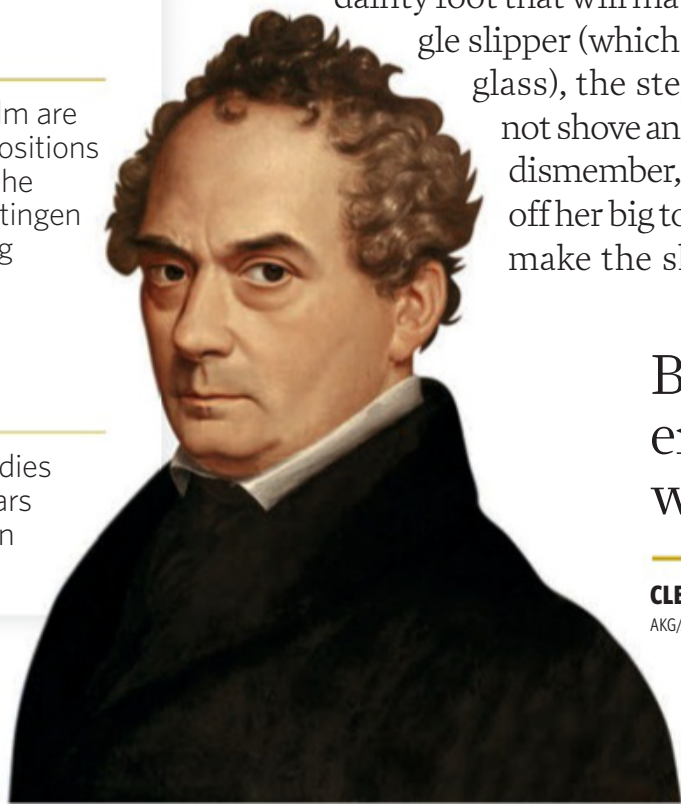
other cutting off part of her heel. And at the story's close, Cinderella's wedding to the prince includes two white birds, which rather than cheerfully tweet Cinderella on her way to happily ever after, peck out the stepsisters' eyes.

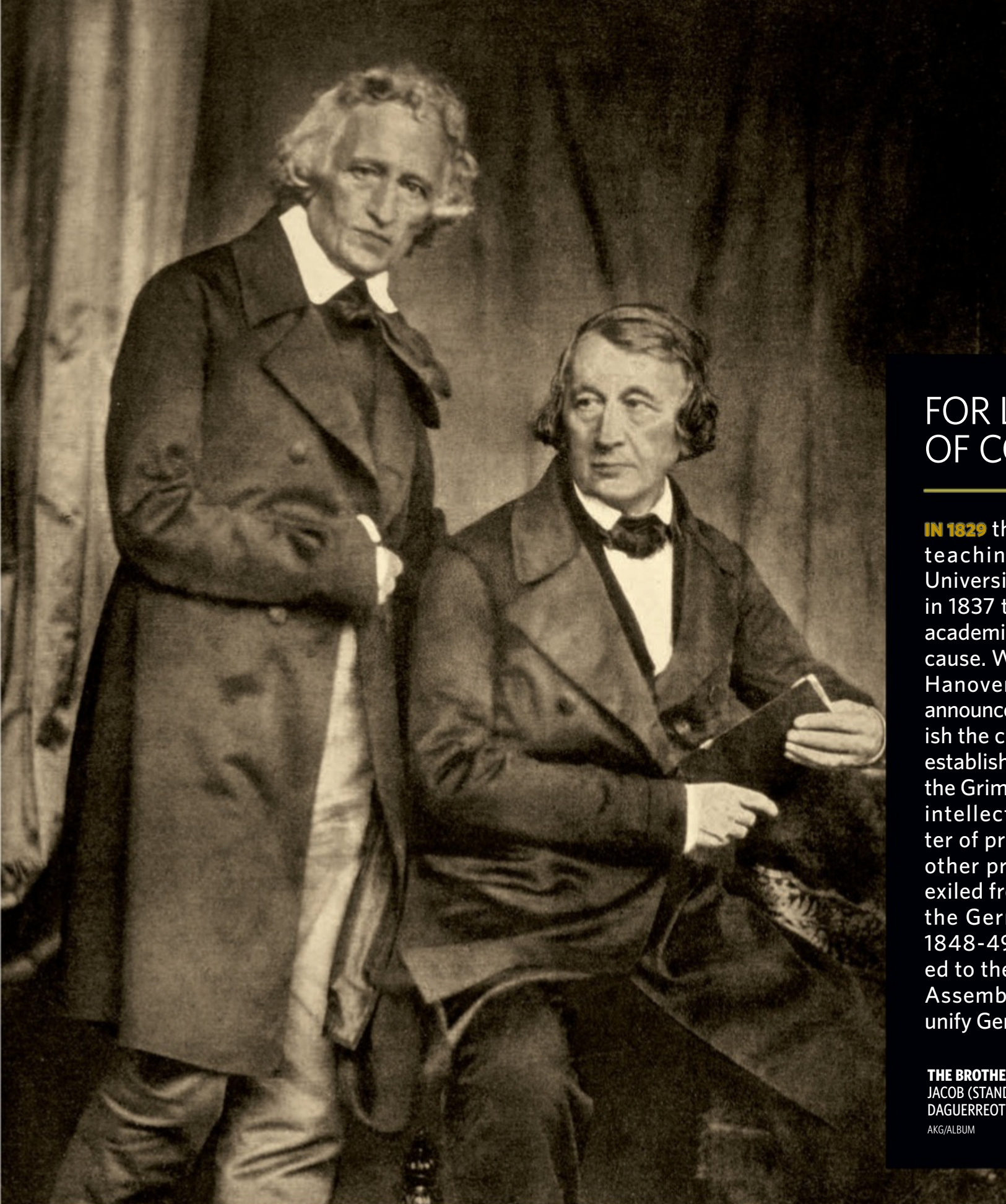
The brothers Grimm published what would become one of the most influential and famous collections of folklore in the world. *Children's and Household Tales* (*Kinder- und Hausmärchen*), later titled *Grimm's Fairy Tales*, are childhood-defining stories. The Grimms, however, had curated the collection as an academic anthology for scholars of German culture, not as a collection of bedtime stories for young readers.

Amid the political and social turbulence of the Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815), as France conquered Germanic lands, Jacob and Wilhelm were driven by nationalism to highlight their homeland and heritage. They were inspired by German Romantic authors and philosophers who believed that the purest forms of culture, those that bonded a community, could be found in stories shared from generation to generation. Storytelling expressed the essence of German culture and recalled the spirit and basic values of its people. By excavating Germany's oral traditions,

Brentano inspired the Grimms to embark on the project they would work on for the rest of their lives.

CLEMENS BRENTANO, 19TH-CENTURY PORTRAIT BY EMILIE LINDER
AKG/ALBUM





FOR LOVE OF COUNTRY

IN 1829 the Grimms acquired teaching positions at the University of Göttingen. But in 1837 they sacrificed their academic posts for a political cause. When the new king of Hanover, Ernest Augustus, announced that he would abolish the constitutional regime established four years earlier, the Grimms, along with other intellectuals, signed a letter of protest. They and five other professors were thus exiled from Hanover. During the German revolutions of 1848-49, Jacob was elected to the Frankfurt National Assembly, which sought to unify Germany.

THE BROTHERS IN LATER LIFE

JACOB (STANDING) AND WILHELM GRIMM IN A DAGUERREOTYPE FROM CIRCA 1850

AKG/ALBUM

the brothers urgently sought to “preserve them from vanishing . . . to be forever silent in the tumult of our times.”

Once Upon a Time

Like Cinderella and many of the characters in their folktales, the story of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm is a rags-to-riches one. The brothers were born one year apart in Hanau, in the Holy Roman Empire’s state of Hesse-Kassel (in present-day Germany, near Frankfurt). In 1796, just a few days after Jacob, the eldest, turned 11, their father died suddenly of

pneumonia, plunging the once middle-class family of six children into poverty. Two years later, Jacob and Wilhelm left home to attend high school in Kassel, a privilege made possible by their aunt’s financial support. The inseparable pair shared the same diligent work habits, studying for up to 12 hours a day.

After graduating, Jacob moved to Marburg in 1802 to study law at the university; Wilhelm followed a year later. Most of the students from wealthier families received a tuition stipend, but the Grimms’ drastic change in financial circumstance

and thus social status meant that they had to pay for their own education. But this setback later proved fortuitous. As Jacob later wrote in his autobiography, “Sparseness spurs a person to industriousness and work.”

The pair had entered the university intending to echo their father’s career in law and civil service. But identifying with the hardworking “folk” whose language and stories they would later preserve and publish, they instead discovered a vocation that would define their lives and their legacy.

TELL ALL

Dorothea Viehmann shares her stories with the Grimms. 19th-century oil painting by Louis Katzenstein

BRIDGEMAN/ACI



Friedrich Karl von Savigny, a professor at the University of Marburg, sparked Jacob and Wilhelm's interest in German history and literature and the new field of philology, the study of language in historical texts. Savigny introduced the brothers to his scholarly circle of Clemens Brentano and Achim von Arnim, German

writers influenced by Johann Gottfried von Herder, a philosopher who called for a rediscovery and preservation of *Volks poesie*, the people's poetry.

In 1805 Jacob worked as Savigny's assistant in Paris, collecting documents on German customs, law, and literature. Jacob and Wilhelm were prolific letter-

writers during their rare times apart, and while in Paris, Jacob wrote to Wilhelm in Marburg of his desire to devote his life to the study of German literary history.

Arnim and Brentano had published a collection of old German folk songs, and Brentano, wanting to continue his philological pursuits, asked the Grimms for their help in combing library shelves for

folktales. The brothers found some texts in books, but they also focused on oral traditions, seeking out storytellers in friends and acquaintances. Most of them were women, one of whom, Dorothea Wild, would later marry Wilhelm. The person who contributed the most to the Grimms' collection was Dorothea Pierson Viehmann, whose father owned a popular inn near Kassel. She shared the many tales that travelers had told to her.

MASS APPEAL

AS THEIR collection of stories gained popularity, the brothers Grimm drastically edited or even deleted more than 40 tales in subsequent editions to appeal to a wider—and younger—audience. The world-famous collection has been translated into more than 160 languages.

COVER OF AN 1865 VERSION OF *CHILDREN'S AND HOUSEHOLD TALES*
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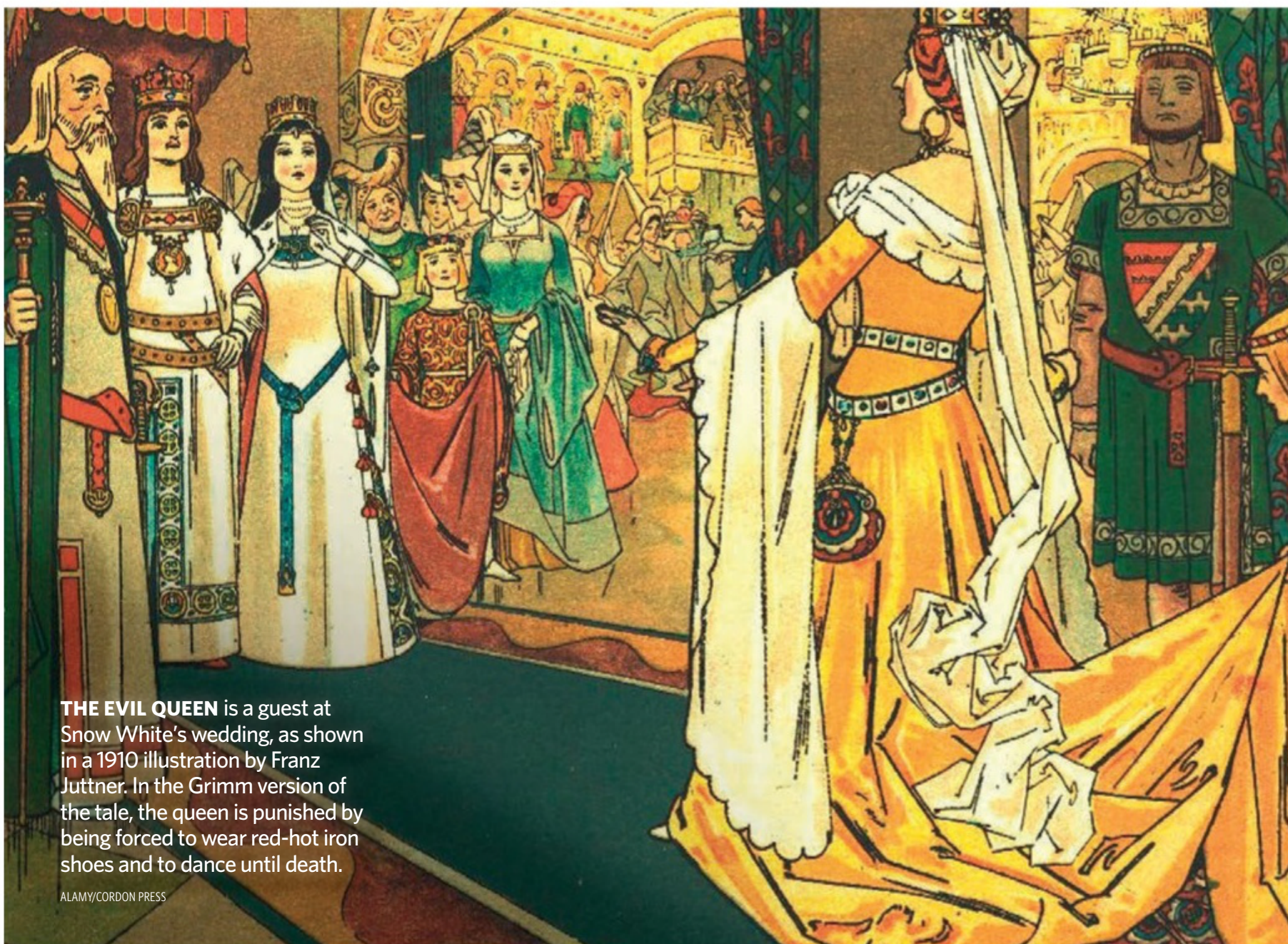
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THE EVIL QUEEN is a guest at Snow White's wedding, as shown in a 1910 illustration by Franz Juttner. In the Grimm version of the tale, the queen is punished by being forced to wear red-hot iron shoes and to dance until death.

ALAMY/CORDON PRESS

A Happy Ending

Brentano did not use the 54 tales that Jacob and Wilhelm sent him in 1810, but Arnim urged them to publish their collection nonetheless.

Published in 1812, *Children's and Household Tales* was not an immediate success. Even so, the brothers' subsequent publications of philological research—two volumes of German legends and one of early German literary history, among others—cemented their reputation as innovative scholars in the field.

Over a 40-year span, seven editions of the folktale collection were published.

The final edition, published in 1857, is the best known and is notably different from the first in both style and content. The brothers asserted that they collected the stories with “exactness and truth,” without adding embellishment or details of their own. In later editions, Wilhelm expanded the originally shorter, sparser prose and modified plots to make parts of the dark, tragic stories more accessible to children.

Beginning in 1815, illustrations were added to the books. The stories in the first edition are thus more faithful to the oral tradition than those in the last, which,

together with Wilhelm's adaptations, offered a more literary approach.

The Grimms had not intended to publish a book of folktales. They wanted to resurrect the German oral tradition, but in the process, they ultimately curated a culturally encompassing collection of tales. Though the brothers became a household name because of it, *Children's and Household Tales* was part of a bigger pursuit, to excavate and preserve the oral and written forms of German culture, to restore this treasure to the people.

As philologists, collectors, researchers, and editors, the brothers helped establish the methodology of collecting and documenting folklore. Their pioneering, scientific approach changed the course of historical linguistics, setting a standard worthy of imitation.

The Grimms had not intended to publish a book of folktales. Their aim was to preserve German culture and restore it to the people.

—Isabel Hernández

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Legends of the Vampire

In the 17th and 18th centuries, vampire mania swept through eastern Europe, and a French cleric collected all the tales he could find. His work inspired not only scholarly debate but also the first works of vampire fiction.

Bram Stoker's original manuscript of *Dracula* included a preface that was cut before the novel was published in 1897. In this outtake, the creator of the world's most famous vampire believed that he was not writing pure fiction: "I am quite convinced that there is no doubt whatever that the events here described really took place, however unbelievable and incomprehensible they might appear at first sight. And I am further convinced that they must always remain to some extent incomprehensible."

Count Dracula was the literary culmination of two centuries of a resolute belief in the undead who walked among, and attacked, the living in eastern Europe. One of the strongest influences on Stoker, and other 19th-century authors, was the work of 18th-century Benedictine monk and distinguished biblical scholar Antoine Augustin Calmet.

A valuable repository for vampire lore, Calmet's two-volume supernatural survey, *Dissertations Upon the Apparitions of Angels, Daemons, and Ghosts, and Concerning the Vampires of Hungary, Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia*, was published in 1746. The author carefully collected and examined numerous reports of vampire attacks that were emerging from eastern Europe in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. These accounts triggered an intense scholarly debate as philosophers and physicians alike sought to resolve the disconnect between the reports' fantastic details and their reputable sources.

Calmet acknowledged in his preface that the academic study of supernatural forces might invite criticism and derision, but he insisted that the testimonies from such reliable witnesses were too detailed and consistent to dismiss as pure delusion or outright

invention. The validity of the various vampire reports, he insisted, merited careful consideration.

He documented many accounts of those who claimed to see the dead that "come back to earth, talk, walk, infest villages, ill use both men and beasts, suck the blood of their near relations, destroy their health, and finally cause their death." These undead, he wrote, "are called by the name of vampires."

Serbian Tales

One of the most famous cases in Calmet's collection came from Austrian army surgeon Johann Flückinger. The doctor described the case of

SUPERSTITION UNDER STUDY

AN 1850 EDITION OF CALMET'S WORK was edited by English scholar Rev. Henry Christmas. He believed none of the accounts, but he thought they had value beyond entertainment: "[T]hey have their philosophical value; they have a still greater historical value; and they show how far even upright minds may be warped by imperfect education, and slavish deference to authority."

A.A. CALMET (DETAIL), IN AN 18TH-CENTURY FRENCH ENGRAVING
BNF



HAVING BEEN pierced through the heart with a stake, the body of a suspected vampire is "finished off" with a gunshot in a Transylvanian cemetery. 19th-century engraving

WHITE IMAGES/SCALA, FLORENCE





Arnold Paole, a soldier and alleged vampire victim from a Serbian village. To banish vestiges of the vampire, Paole ate dirt from its grave and smeared himself with its blood. He returned to his life as a farmer, but soon after died in a hay wagon accident.

About a month after his death, villagers claimed that Paole had risen from the dead and killed several people. Animals and livestock were also attacked and drained of blood. Suspecting vampirism, the villagers exhumed Paole's body. They found it intact—even the nails had grown. Fresh blood covered the inside of the coffin. The villagers thus “drove a

AN OLD OBSESSION

BELIEF IN VAMPIRES and ways to eradicate them existed in the Middle Ages too. When epidemics struck, they were often blamed on vampires and “suspicious” corpses would be disinterred. Skeletons have been found with iron stakes driven into their chests (right). Skulls with large stones or bricks placed in their mouth have also been discovered—an exorcism technique believed to keep the corpse from eating its way out of the grave.

NURPHOTO/GETTY IMAGES



BEFORE DRACULA

PUBLISHED IN 1872, the short story “Carmilla” by Irish author Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu bore traces of Calmet’s vampire collection. In “Carmilla” a young Englishwoman named Laura becomes ill after succumbing to the wiles of a female vampire, Carmilla, who is revealed to be Mircalla, Countess Karnstein. To dispense with the vampire, Laura’s father follows methods similar to those in Calmet’s *Dissertation*. He finds Carmilla’s tomb, drives a stake into her heart, decapitates her, and burns her remains.

AN ENGRAVING FROM THE 1872 SERIALIZATION OF J.S. LE FANU’S VAMPIRE STORY, “CARMILLA”

BRITISH LIBRARY/BRIDGEMAN/ACI



stake through his heart, whereby he gave an audible groan and bled copiously.” The bodies of other villagers, thought to have been also transformed into vampires, were disinterred and likewise maimed in an attempt to “kill” them for good.

Exquisite Corpses

The incorruptibility of a corpse was thought to be evidence that a dead

person was a vampire. Calmet noted that some bodies, after several months or even years in the grave, were found with “the blood in a liquid state, the flesh entire, the limbs flexible and pliable.”

The observation was accurate, but science rather than the supernatural can explain such postmortem phenomena. In large part, the belief in vampirism grew out of a lack of knowledge about the natural processes of decomposition after death, which can, under certain

conditions, be delayed for a long period of time.

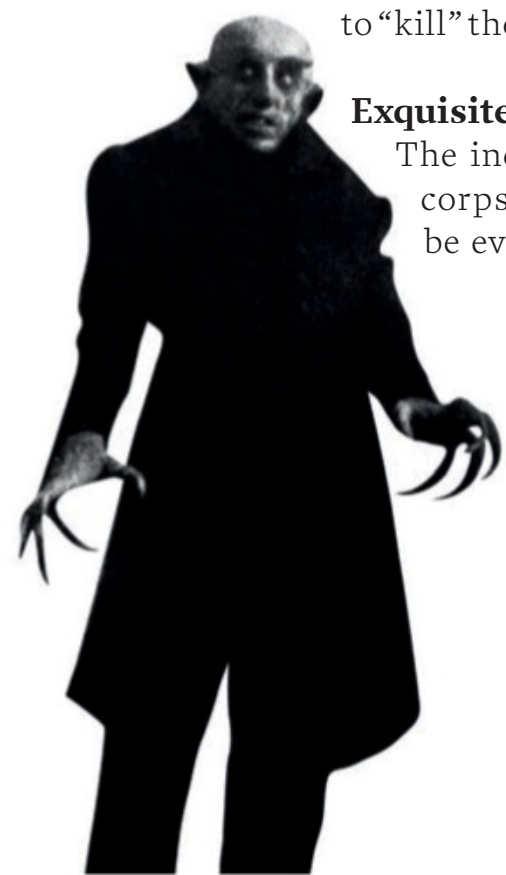
A body can remain well preserved through two natural processes; one of them, saponification, occurs when the body is buried in a cold, damp environment, as is common in eastern Europe. During the saponification process, the body’s fatty acids turn into a waxy, soap-like compound that covers the corpse and prevents putrefaction. A saponified body also retains a certain flexibility, as described in Calmet’s work.

Accounts in Calmet’s *Dissertation* also noted that vampires’ hair and fingernails continued to lengthen even after death. Certain postmortem changes may have given the illusion of continued growth. After death, the skin dehydrates, causing it to retract from the hair follicles. This may make the hair, especially stubble on the chin, look longer. The same is true of

Accounts in Calmet’s work also noted that vampires’ hair and fingernails continued to lengthen even after death.

THE VAMPIRE IN THE 1922 MOVIE *NOSFERATU*, AN UNAUTHORIZED FILM OF BRAM STOKER’S NOVEL *DRACULA*

ALBUM



To Vanquish a Vampire

AS FEAR OF VAMPIRES GREW, people sought to protect themselves from a potential attack. To keep vampires at bay, some people in eastern Europe would hang garlic around their necks and smear it on their children and cattle. But the most effective protection, as Calmet advocated in his treatise, was to pierce the heart of the vampire corpse with a stake, cut off its head, and burn the remains.



AN ANTI-VAMPIRE KIT,
MADE UP OF 19TH- AND
20TH-CENTURY ITEMS. ROYAL
ARMOURIES MUSEUM, LEEDS
ROYAL ARMOURIES MUSEUM/ALAMY/ACI

nails, as the skin around them retracts and makes more of the nail bed visible.

Bloodstains on an unearthed corpse was also a sign that someone had become a vampire. As Calmet explained, “[Vampires] suck the blood of living men or animals in such abundance that sometimes it flows from them at the nose, and sometimes the corpse swims in its own blood oozed out in its coffin.”

Again, medical science can provide an explanation. The length of time that blood remains liquid depends on environmental conditions. In cold temperatures the blood can stay fluid for at least three to four days. If bodies were unearthed during that period on suspicion of vampirism, blood could still be found in their veins. Stories of corpses being stained with blood or “swimming” in blood (the latter likely an exaggeration) may have been derived from postmortem hemorrhages.

A blow to the body during transfer to its resting place can result in a trauma sufficient to make blood appear to flow from the nose or mouth.

Hunting Vampires

As illustrated by the story of Arnold Paole, popular belief held that to kill a vampire, the corpse had to be disinterred and pierced with a stake. Allegedly, when the stake penetrated the body, the vampire would let out a cry, further proof that the vampire had been alive. But a natural explanation pertains to this too.

Air enclosed in the thoracic cavity, forced out when the body was struck, was likely to produce sound as it passed through the throat. Already believing they were face-to-face with an undead vampire, this noise could have sounded like a cry of pain to witnesses. In a situation of great tension, the imagination

could amplify the slightest of noises to a blood-chilling moan.

In 1762 philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau incredulously attacked Calmet’s work. He noted: “If there is in this world a well-attested account, it is that of vampires. Nothing is lacking: official reports, affidavits . . . of surgeons, of priests, of magistrates. And with all that, who is there who believes in vampires?”

Rousseau may have doubted, but the supernatural belief that the dead could rise to terrorize went beyond reason in 17th- and 18th-century eastern Europe. Calmet’s collection of vampire stories fed the imagination and inspired the imaginations of several 19th-century authors—John William Polidori, Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, and Bram Stoker—who all helped pioneer the vampire story as a popular literary genre.

—Oscar Urbiola

MINOTAUR

THE MONSTER IN THE MAZE

Greeks and Romans loved the myth of the Minotaur, a half man, half bull who dwelled in the Labyrinth until he was slain by the Athenian hero Theseus. The legend's details and symbols reveal much about the distant past that shaped the Mediterranean world.

AMARANTA SBARDELLA



THE NATURE OF THE BEAST

George Frederic Watts created his 1885 painting of the Minotaur crushing a songbird "to hold up to detestation the bestial and brutal." Tate Gallery, London
Opposite: A fifth-century B.C. coin from Crete depicts the mythical Labyrinth. National Roman Museum, Rome

PAINTING: ALBUM COIN: BRIDGEMAN/ACI



Deep inside the Labyrinth on the island of Crete lived a Minotaur, a monster half man, half bull. Imprisoned there by his stepfather, King Minos of Crete, he dined on human flesh supplied by the city of Athens. Every nine years, Minos commanded Athens to send 14 youths in tribute. The horrible rite continued until the Athenian hero Theseus came to Crete, entered the Labyrinth, and slew the beast.

The story of the Minotaur has thrilled people for thousands of years and inspired myriad works of art: pottery, poetry, plays, the art of Picasso, operas, movies, and video games. Although the myth can be enjoyed as a satisfying tale, archaeologists now know that its fabulous qualities have roots deep in real events in the Bronze Age.

The bull-headed man in Minos's maze embodies several traits found in the culture of Crete and ancient Minoan civilization. Bulls and maze motifs are found throughout Minoan culture, which dominated the Mediterranean from about 3000 B.C. to about 1100 B.C. In confronting and

overcoming the bull—a symbol of Crete—Theseus, the legendary founder of Athens, reflects the flowering of Aegean civilizations beginning in the middle of the second millennium B.C., as mainland Greece replaced Crete as the dominant power.

A Labyrinthine Myth

Classical authors have told and retold the tale of the Minotaur. The tellings vary, but there are common traits throughout each one. Bulls, in various forms, play crucial roles in the story. In the

most common version, Zeus, king of the gods, falls in love with Europa, a Phoenician princess. He turns himself into a gentle, white bull, charms her, and carries her off to the island of Crete. She later gives birth to his son Minos, who grows up to become king of Crete.

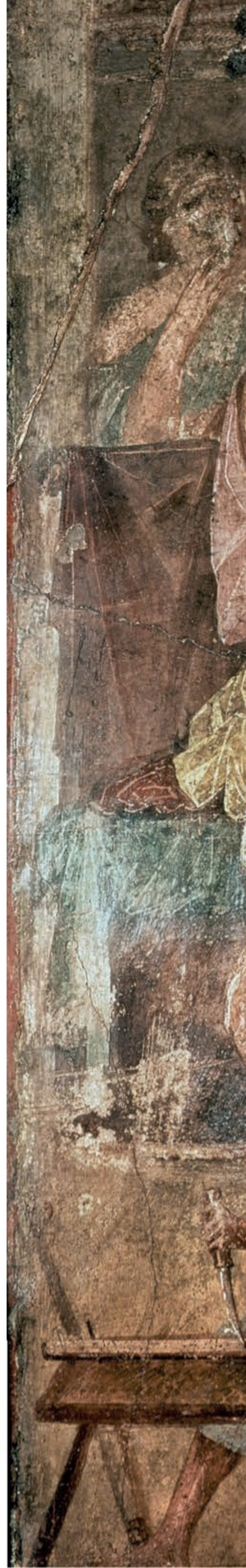
To seal his reign's legitimacy, Minos asks the sea god Poseidon to send him a bull that he will sacrifice in the god's honor. Poseidon duly sends a magnificent white bull from the surf. But at the moment of sacrifice, Minos, fascinated by the beauty of the animal, spares his life.

Furious at this disrespect, the sea god makes Minos's wife, Pasiphae, go mad with desire for the bull. Pasiphae asks the Athenian inventor Daedalus to design a disguise for her so she can get close to the beast. He creates a life-size hollow cow, and Pasiphae climbs inside it to entertain the bull. The result of their union is a bull-human hybrid child she names Asterion. Better known as the Minotaur, he is imprisoned by King Minos in an intricate Labyrinth designed by Daedalus.

Meanwhile, in Athens, a young prince, Theseus is coming of age. Some years before, the Athenians killed one of King Minos's sons, for which the Cretan king exacted a terrible price: Every nine years, Athens should send to Crete

Bulls, in various forms, play a crucial role in the story of Theseus and the Minotaur.

A SOAPSTONE RHYTON (DRINKING VESSEL) IN THE FORM OF A BULL'S HEAD FROM KNOSSOS, CRETE, CIRCA 1500 B.C. HERAKLION ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM, CRETE
AKG/ALBUM





UNNATURAL UNION

This first-century A.D. fresco from the House of Vettii in Pompeii depicts the inventor Daedalus showing Queen Pasiphae the cow disguise he has invented for her.

ALBUM/ORNOZ

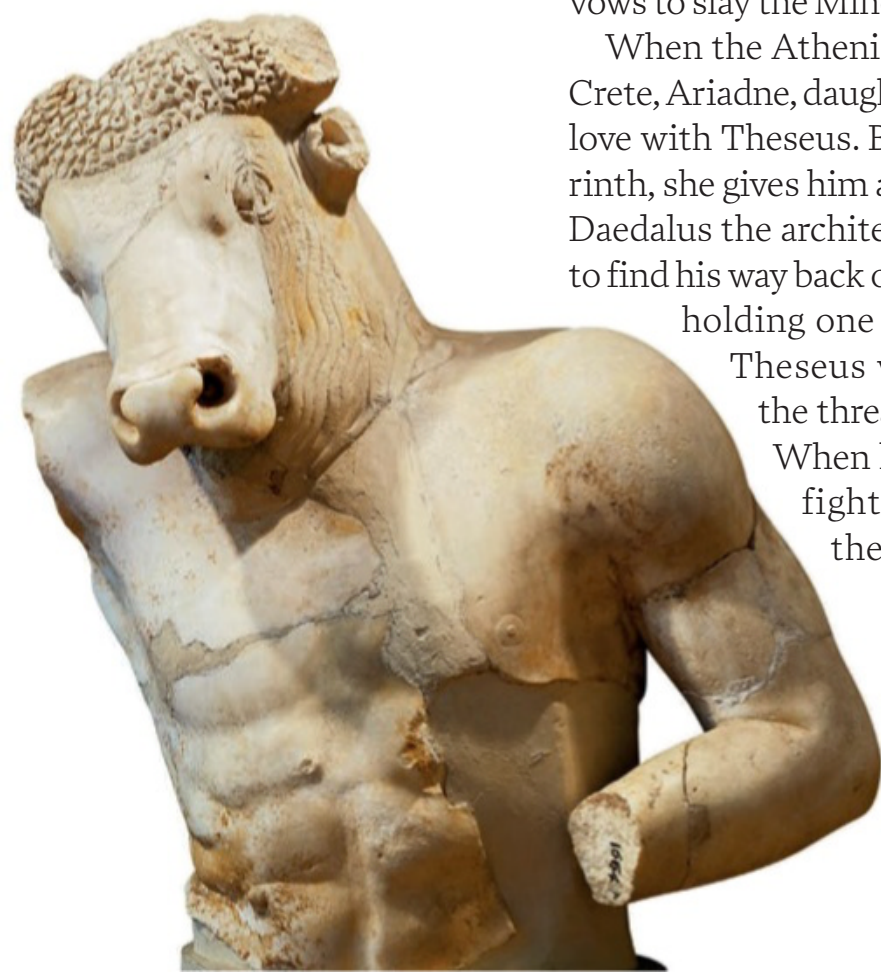


ARIADNE'S GIFT TO THESEUS WILL ENABLE HIM TO NAVIGATE THE LABYRINTH. 19TH-CENTURY PAINTING BY PELAGIO PALAGI. GALLERY OF MODERN ART, BOLOGNA, ITALY

DEA/ALBUM

14 young Athenians (seven maidens and seven youths) for the Minotaur to devour. Theseus volunteers as one of the sacrificial victims and vows to slay the Minotaur.

When the Athenians arrive at the island of Crete, Ariadne, daughter of King Minos, falls in love with Theseus. Before he enters the Labyrinth, she gives him a ball of thread (the idea of Daedalus the architect) so that he will be able to find his way back out. Ariadne stays outside, holding one end of the thread, while Theseus walks through the maze, the thread unraveling as he walks. When he finds the Minotaur, he fights and kills him, freeing the other young Athenians.



A ROMAN COPY OF A FIFTH-CENTURY B.C. GREEK MINOTAUR SCULPTURE BY MYRON ON THE ACROPOLIS. NATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM, ATHENS

DEA/SCALA, FLORENCE

Everyone follows the thread he left behind to safety. Finally free, Theseus sets sail for Athens, taking Princess Ariadne with him. But Theseus abandons Ariadne on the island of Naxos before continuing on to Athens with her sister, Phaedra, whom he marries.

Words and Images

This story, as it has been passed down over the centuries, evolved slowly, transforming again and again over the centuries. The legend of the Minotaur circulated in the Greek world from ancient times, but he appears more often in early visual works of art rather than literary ones.

Although there are clear references to Theseus, Minos, and Ariadne in *The Iliad* (written circa eighth century B.C.), Homer never names the Minotaur. A fragment from the poet Sappho of Lesbos reveals that the story of human blood tribute that Minos demanded of the Athenians was already being told at the beginning of the sixth century B.C. The fifth-century B.C. Greek historian Herodotus mentions Minos, but not his monstrous stepson. Stories of Theseus, hero of Athens, were popular, but writers tended to focus on Theseus's other accomplishments, such as his descent into the underworld or his adventures with the Amazons. The Minotaur is largely absent from the popular Theseus stories in this period.

Showing up on pottery, metalwork, and other decorative art, the Minotaur was, however, a favorite subject for visual artists at this time. An amphora from Tinos, in the Cyclades Islands, dated to around 670–660 B.C., shows the oldest known depiction of the confrontation between the Minotaur and Theseus. Found at Olympia, bronze shield straps, which may date from as early as the mid-seventh century B.C., also show the two fighting.

Another amphora from the Cyclades Islands, dated to the mid-seventh century B.C., even inverts the popular imagining of the Minotaur and instead shows him with a bull's body and a human head. It depicts another detail that would become central to the story: one of the youths who accompany Theseus holds a ball of twine, the object that allowed the Athenian hero to escape from the Labyrinth after killing the beast. Almost every depiction of the monster shows him in combat with Theseus.

References to the Minotaur begin to appear later in Greek literature such as Euripides'



VANQUISHED

This sixth-century B.C. amphora depicts Theseus at the moment of victory. He plunges his weapon into the Minotaur's neck, and blood streams from the wound. British Museum, London

BRITISH MUSEUM/SCALA, FLORENCE

TRODDEN UNDERFOOT

Discovered in 1815, the Theseus Mosaic, found in the fourth-century A.D. Roman villa at Loigerfeld near Salzburg, Austria, depicts key moments from the Minotaur story. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

ALBUM





The Boy Who Flew

BANISHED FROM ATHENS for killing a kinsman, the inventor Daedalus plays a key role in the Minotaur myth. He is the one who creates the cow disguise for Queen Pasiphae that results in the birth of the Minotaur, and he designs the Labyrinth to imprison the beast. After Theseus kills the Minotaur and escapes the maze, King Minos is furious. He locks Daedalus and his son Icarus in the Labyrinth, but Pasiphae secretly releases them. To escape from Crete, Daedalus makes wings from feathers and wax so he and his son can fly to Sicily. On their way, Icarus flies too close to the sun, and the wax melts. He plunges to the sea and drowns. The island Icaria, named for him, is where tradition says his body was washed ashore.



"THE FALL OF ICARUS"
17TH-CENTURY PAINTING
BY CARLO SARACENI
HERITAGE IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES

HOMECOMING

Young Athenians liberated by Theseus disembark in Athens (below) in a scene from the sixth-century B.C. François Vase. Archaeological Museum, Florence

SCALA, FLORENCE

fifth-century B.C. play *The Cretans*. Most of the play has been lost, but fragments survive: The story reveals Pasiphae's experience and her conflict with Minos over the birth of the Minotaur.

Another account of Theseus and the Minotaur comes from the *Bibliotheca*, a massive compilation of Hellenic myths and stories. For centuries, scholars dated the work to the second-century B.C., but further research puts its creation much later, in the first or second century A.D. Credited to an unknown author whom scholars

call Pseudo-Apollodorus, the *Bibliotheca* covers creation myths, the ascension of the gods, and mortal heroes and heroines. The entire history of Minos, Pasiphae, Daedalus, Theseus,

and the Minotaur is covered in great detail in this work, no doubt providing a strong basis for accounts that followed.

Many of the detailed stories of the Minotaur are found in Roman sources. One of the most detailed is from Plutarch's second-century A.D. work *Parallel Lives*, which devotes an entire chapter to Theseus. He compared Theseus, founder of Athens, to Romulus, founder of Rome. *Metamorphoses*, an epic poem written by Ovid in A.D. 8, is another popular telling of the Minotaur legend, featuring great detail about the conquests of Minos throughout Greece before the Labyrinth is built.

Minoan Civilization

For Greeks of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., Theseus was celebrated as a national hero of Athens. The place the Minotaur had in their imagination requires a deeper understanding of Crete's distant past. Crete started to become a trading power in the Mediterranean around 3000 B.C. By the middle of the second millennium B.C., it was at the center of an extensive trade network with Egypt, Syria, the Aegean islands, and mainland Greece.

Minoans established settlements throughout the Mediterranean world along these trade routes, and they brought their culture with them. Crete's language, arts, and textiles were widely dispersed and welcomed. Settlements on Greek islands reveal that even urban planning was exported: Settlements were often laid out in a Minoan style. A Greek culture based at the citadel of Mycenae, some 75 miles west of Athens, enthusiastically absorbed and copied not just the fashionable Cretan ceramics but also the Cretan language.

After 1450 B.C. Crete began to decline as the Mycenaean Greeks started to dominate the eastern Mediterranean. Their written language, known by scholars as Linear B, was adapted from the language of the Minoans and is now known to be an early form of Greek.

From 1900 to 1903, British archaeologist Arthur Evans, working on a hunch that Mycenaean Greece was heavily influenced by Crete, excavated on the island and found a royal palace at the site of Knossos and many artifacts featuring bulls. He named the ancient Cretan culture he unearthed there "Minoan" in honor of the great mythological King Minos, son of Zeus and stepfather to the Minotaur.





PAINTING THE PAST

Following his 1900-1903 excavation of Knossos, Arthur Evans restored the "charging bull" painted relief except for the bull's head, which is original to the site.

MEINRAD RIEDO/AGE FOTOSTOCK

The Sad Fate of Ariadne

THE PRINCESS ARIADNE helps Theseus defeat the Minotaur, but he abandons her on the island of Naxos during the voyage back to Athens. In some versions of the story, the wine god Dionysus commands Theseus to leave her there, so that he can marry her, but in others Theseus discards Ariadne to marry her sister Phaedra. Ariadne's fate is similar to other female characters who love heroes in Greek and Roman stories. In Euripides' play *Medea*, the titular queen is betrayed by Jason, the man for whom she betrays her family to help him win the golden fleece. Dido, in Virgil's *Aeneid*, likewise helps the hero Aeneas, who nevertheless sets sail without her.



"ARIADNE IN NAXOS"
1877 OIL PAINTING
BY EVELYN DE MORGAN
BRIDGEMAN/ACI

ROYAL CUT

A golden *labrys*, a double ax, dating from around 1700 B.C. (below), was a symbol of Cretan royal power. Heraklion Archaeological Museum, Crete

ERICH LESSING/ALBUM



The name Minos does not appear to be a mythical invention. When tablets found at Knossos were deciphered, scholars were excited to find the word "Minos." Historians believe Minos was not the name of an individual king, but the title of kings in general, who would have served as consorts to the more powerful queen.

Historians now consider that Minoan power and culture reached its height around 1600 B.C. Decorated with frescoes funded by the trade in luxury goods, magnificent structures from this time, dedicated to religious and administrative activities, were found by Evans in his excavation of Knossos.

The buildings were covered with vibrantly colored art that reflected the culture's reverence for bulls: Frescoes and figurines,

dating from 1700 to 1400 B.C., show figures jumping over the bulls in a ritual called *taurokathapsia*. This rite may have been practiced at sacred ceremonies and sacrifices to the gods. A symbol of fertility in many religions, bulls were ritually killed using the double-edged ax or *labrys*, an emblem of royal power.

The Minotaur's prison, the Labyrinth, also has deep roots in Minoan material culture, but scholars have different theories as to its origin. As no archaeological remains of a maze have ever been found on Crete, some researchers have suggested that the term could be synonymous with the palace itself. The Labyrinth could come from this vast complex of rooms. A proposed etymology for the name comes from the word for the sacred ax, *labrys*, and its use in animal sacrifice.

Another theory is that the design of the mythical Labyrinth grew out of a structure that was not a maze at all, but a dance floor. Homer describes such a floor in *The Iliad*, on which the aristocratic youth of Crete cavorted, designed by Daedalus, the same genius who designed the Labyrinth in the myth. Perhaps, it is speculated, the mosaic evolved into the sinister maze.

Myth and Reality

To the Greeks of the sixth and fifth centuries B.C., Crete would have seemed a distant memory of an ancient power that was once respected, admired, and feared. It was also one that their ancestors had overcome, and the story of the Minotaur reflects that cultural belief. In the classical era, Theseus of Athens was their local hero, a prince who brought glory to Athens through his many adventures. Theseus was embraced by Athenians as a symbol of their city.

At this same time, Athens's main rival was Persia. Defeat of the Persian navy at Salamis in 480 B.C. ushered in a period of military and commercial expansion for Athens. During this period, representations of Theseus and the Minotaur on pottery spiked considerably.

Some scholars believe that artists used the Minotaur as a symbol for a foreign enemy: Crete was the foe in the old world—as Persia was in the current one. Theseus represents the glory of Athens as he subdues the monster to free his home from the dominion of Crete. ■

ITALIAN HISTORIAN AMARANTA SBARDELLA IS THE AUTHOR OF A WORK EXPLORING 20TH-CENTURY VERSIONS OF THE MINOTAUR MYTH.

HERALDING A HERO

In a fresco from Pompeii, one of the young Athenians who has been released shows his gratitude to Theseus. The slain Minotaur can be seen in the doorway. National Archaeological Museum, Naples

WHITE IMAGES/SCALA, FLORENCE





JEWEL OF ANCIENT JORDAN JERASH

The glorious city of Jerash was a multicultural trading hub that grew prosperous off the commerce flowing through the region. Absorbed by Rome, the wealthy city built fabulous monuments, becoming a beacon of Roman civilization on the eastern fringes of the empire.

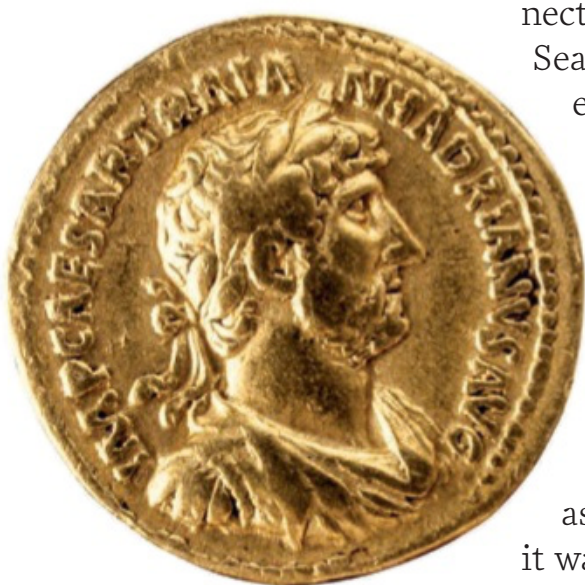
EVA TOBALINA



WELCOMING ARMS

Viewed here from the ruins of the Temple of Zeus-Jupiter, the magnificent, colonnaded Oval Plaza of Jerash linked the city's southern entrance (to the right of the image) with the colonnaded Cardo Maximus, which cut north through the city.

KITTI BOONNITROD/GETTY IMAGES



AN IMPERIAL VISITOR

A second-century aureus (above) bears the head of Emperor Hadrian, who wintered in Jerash in A.D. 129-130 during his travels across the Roman Empire.

ASF/ALBUM

The Old Testament of the Bible describes the journey of the Israelites to the Promised Land. They needed to cross the kingdom of Edom, a land that straddled modern southern Israel and Jordan. The Israelites pleaded with the Edomites to “go by the King’s Highway until we have passed through your territory” (Num. 21:22).

The existence of the King’s Highway can be traced back to the Bronze Age. This royal route was central to trade in the Middle East, connecting Egypt via the Gulf of Aqaba on the Red Sea all the way north to Damascus. No great empire was centered along this road, but the cities along it grew rich from commerce, as traders bearing grain from Egypt, incense from Yemen, pearls from the Red Sea, and spices from India traveled along the King’s Highway.

One of the greatest cities was Jerash, founded as Greek culture was spreading across the region. Enriched by trade, Jerash was shaped by waves of conquerors until it was absorbed by the eastward expansion of Rome. Lying 30 miles north of the Jordanian capital Amman, today Jerash is prized as one of the best preserved of the Roman Decapolis, the 10 Hellenistic cities clustered along the empire’s eastern border.

Beside the River of Gold

According to inscriptions, Jerash, or Gerasa, was named for its first inhabitants: the old soldiers—*gerasmenos* means elderly people in Greek—of Alexander the Great’s campaigns in the early

fourth century B.C. After having fought against the Persians, tradition says these veterans were rewarded with a parcel of fertile land between the Jordan Valley and the desert.

Although the site may well have served as a temporary garrison for Alexander, this founding story is unlikely. The original name of the city was not, in fact, Jerash, which is a Semitic name, but rather Antiochia ad Chrysorrhoam, a Greek name that means “Antioch beside the river of gold.” This early settlement was likely founded by the second-century B.C. Seleucid king Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

The Seleucid kings were descended from Alexander the Great’s general Seleucus I Nicator, who seized control of the eastern part of Alexander’s vast empire in 312 B.C. His dynasty spread Greek customs and culture throughout the Middle East in the third and second centuries B.C. The Greek colonists probably merged with the local population who had been living there as early as the Neolithic period.

Having carefully chosen this lucrative spot on the King’s Highway, the Seleucids started work on their new city with a flurry of building, dedicating temples to various gods in the Greek pantheon. As well as competing with other Hellenized towns and cities in prestige and trade, Jerash also maintained close ties with them, including Philadelphia (now the Jordanian capital Amman) and Heliopolis (today Baalbek in eastern Lebanon).

Jerash was a prominent commercial center, and a diverse group of peoples interacted there. Greek colonists and indigenous Aramaeans rubbed shoulders with merchants from Persia, Parthia, and even India. To the south of Jerash

JEWEL OF THE EAST

175-164 B.C.

King Antiochus IV, a successor of one of Alexander’s generals, founds Jerash on the site of an older settlement.

102 B.C.

Alexander Jannaeus, king of Judaea, conquers Jerash ending its occupation by a local warlord.

63 B.C.

Pompey the Great gains control of the region. Jerash enjoys both autonomy and Roman protection.

A.D. 106

Trajan absorbs Jerash and Petra into the province of Arabia Petraea, and begins a major building program in Jerash.

A.D. 129-130

Emperor Hadrian winters in the city. Enriched by trade, Jerash begins a century-long golden age.



CILICIA

(FROM 64 B.C.)

TARSUS

ANTIOCH

Beroea
(Aleppo)

SYRIA

(FROM 64 B.C.)

CYPRUS

M E D I T E R R A N E A N
S E A

Laodicea

Orontes

Seriane

Emesa
(Homs)

Palmyra

Tripolis
(Tripoli)

Heliopolis
(Baalbek)

Berytus
(Beirut)

Damascus

Tyrus
(Tyre)

Sea of Galilee

CESARAEA
MARITIMA

Scythopolis
(Bet She'an)

BOSTRA
(BUŞRÁ AL ĤARĪRĪ)

JUDAEA

(FROM A.D. 6)

Jerash
(Jarash)

Philadelphia
(Amman)

Aelia
Capitolina
(Jerusalem)

Gaza

Dead Sea

Jordan

King's Highway

EGYPTUS

(FROM 30 B.C.)

*ARABIA
PETRAEA*

(FROM A.D. 106)

Petra

Aela
(Aqaba)

CILICIA

Roman province

TARSUS

Provincial capital

Tyrus
(Tyre)

Other city
(Modern name)

.....

Provincial border

—

Roman road

MAP: EOSGIS.COM



MAGNIFICENT MOSAICS

Above, a mosaic pavement from Jerash, produced in the early third century A.D., depicts the Greek historian Thucydides. Staatliche Museen, Berlin

BPK/SCALA, FLORENCE

lay Petra, the capital of the flourishing Nabataean empire that was minting its own coins at the time the Seleucids were founding Jerash.

Nabataean caravans passed through Jerash on the way to Damascus and Palmyra, leaving their own cultural mark on the city. Greek and Semitic names have been found on inscriptions at the site, and underlying the dominant Hellenistic religious rituals, the ancient Semitic gods also had a foothold. Along with Greek, other languages could have been heard on Jerash's streets, including the indigenous Aramaic language, which would later be the mother tongue of Jesus of Nazareth.

Roman Influences

The Seleucid rulers did not have long to leave their mark on Jerash. The rise of the Parthian empire to the east was loosening the grip of Alexander's successors on the region. In 129 B.C. the Seleucid king Antiochus VII Sidetes was killed in a sudden Parthian attack.

Syria was plunged into chaos, and Jerash was briefly ruled by warlords.

As the Seleucids declined, another powerful civilization sought to control Jerash and the trade flowing along the King's Highway. Alexander Jannaeus, king of the Hasmonaeen dynasty of Judaea, took over Jerash in 102 B.C. Controlling what is today modern Israel, the Palestinian territories, and western Jordan, the Hasmonaeans ruled the city until 63 B.C.

That same year, Pompey the Great of Rome vanquished the king of Pontus, Mithridates VI Eupator, who controlled lands in what is now Turkey. The death of Mithridates allowed Rome to gain a strong foothold in the eastern Mediterranean and to expand in the region.

In 63 B.C. Pompey annexed the province of Syria, to the north of Jerash. Jerash itself, and its neighboring Hellenistic cities, were singled out by Rome for special treatment as oases of classical culture in a region of Semitic customs. The city was grouped with nine other Hellenistic settlements—including, according to the first-century A.D. Roman writer Pliny the Elder, Scythopolis, Damascus, and Philadelphia. The Romans termed these the Decapolis, a Greek term meaning "10 cities," which were permitted to function as semi-independent city-states.

Building Boom

When Emperor Nero conquered the Nabataean Kingdom in the first century A.D., its capital, Petra, was tied ever closer to the Roman world. The region boomed as a result, and Jerash was an immediate beneficiary as wealth from the Nabataean caravans flowed through the streets.

At the beginning of the second century, Emperor Trajan formally incorporated the city, and the Nabataean lands, into the new province of Arabia Petraea. Swathes of roadways were paved, including the old King's Highway—from then known as the Via Nova Traiana (Trajan's New Road)—which brought the wealth of the east flooding up to Jerash through Aqaba.

Jerash used its wealth to build a huge Temple of Artemis in the mid-second century. Its grandeur, together with its Oval Plaza, South Theater, and arch dedicated to Emperor Hadrian, still amazes visitors today. Although Rome's wider economic crisis in the third century disrupted its lucrative trade flow, Jerash's ability to adapt ensured it underwent a second flush of prosperity when it fell under the aegis of the Byzantine Empire in the fourth century.

An earthquake destroyed much of the city in 749, but the ruins were located in 1806 by German explorer Ulrich Jasper Seetzen. Today Jerash is considered to be among the best preserved of all Roman ruins in the Middle East; the city's remains are prized by UNESCO as an "ancient meeting place of East and West." ■

A SPECIALIST IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE, EVA TOBALINA TEACHES ANCIENT HISTORY AT THE INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LA RIOJA, SPAIN.

A LION OF JUPITER
JERASH'S SECOND-CENTURY TEMPLE OF ZEUS-JUPITER WAS DECORATED WITH RELIEFS DEPICTING LIONS, SUCH AS THIS ONE, BELOW.
DEA/GETTY IMAGES





FIT FOR A GODDESS

Fronted by six columns, the second-century Temple of Artemis, dedicated to Jerash's patron goddess, consisted of a portico, staircase, and a colonnaded terrace.

STEVE DAVEY/AGE FOTOSTOCK

JERASH IN THE SECOND
CENTURY A.D., AT THE HEIGHT OF
ITS ROMAN IMPERIAL SPLENDOR
ILLUSTRATION: JOSEP RAMON CASALS



South
Theater

Cardo Maximus

Oval
Plaza

Temple of Zeus-
Jupiter

South Gate

Hippodrome

Hadrian's
Arch



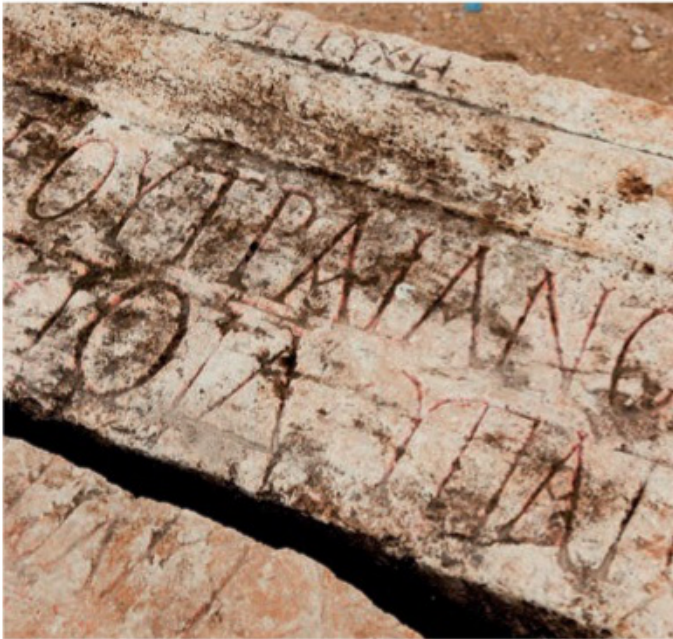
Temple of Artemis

South Tetrapylon

Chrysorrhoas River

A ROMAN CITY

JERASH'S INCORPORATION INTO the Roman Empire heralded a high period of splendor for the Hellenistic city. The illustration shows the settlement as it probably looked in the second century A.D., the period in which many of its impressive monuments were built. Ringed with groves of fruit trees, Jerash was very prosperous, benefiting from iron-ore deposits and rich agriculture in its hinterland. The city was built on two low hills, either side of the Chrysorrhoas River. After Trajan's accession the ancient King's Highway became the Via Nova Traiana (New Trajan Road), whose north-south trade brought prosperity, foreign customs, and diverse languages in the early second century. By this period, Jerash's layout was fully Romanized: The main entrance was by the South Gate and led directly to the Oval Plaza and the main street, known as the *Cardo Maximus*. This impressive, colonnaded avenue crossed the entire city from south to north. Its construction dates back to the first century A.D. (although it was modified on several occasions later). The Oval Plaza is from the same period. Traffic would have moved along this great avenue, changing direction at one of the tetrapylons, the four-columned monuments that connected the south-north *Cardo Maximus* with the *Decumani*, the roads that crossed the city from east to west. ■



A DETAIL OF THE INSCRIPTION ON THE ATTIC OF HADRIAN'S SECOND-CENTURY ARCH IN JERASH

AJ WILHELM/GETTY IMAGES

HADRIAN'S ARCH

THE ROMAN EMPIRE reached its widest extent under Emperor Trajan, who died in 117. Just over a decade later, in the course of his epic series of travels around the vast realms under his rule, Trajan's successor, Hadrian, visited the empire's eastern bounds. Proceeding into Judaea from Egypt, he visited Jerusalem, then in ruins following a local revolt. Having resolved to rebuild Jerusalem and rename it, Hadrian decided to stay in the region for the winter of A.D. 129-130. He spent his time in Jerash. To commemorate his extended visit there, a huge triumphal arch, some 123 feet long by 30 feet wide and 70 feet high, was erected to the south of city. Lying some distance from the South Gate, archaeologists believe it may have been intended to mark an

ambitious southern expansion of the city. Such an arch was also built in Athens following Hadrian's sojourn there. Although the arch was intended as a declaration of universal Roman design, it also incorporated Nabataean decorative elements. ■

I

The upper section (attic) was rectangular, divided into two stories and fronted with pilasters.



A commemorative inscription of the emperor's visit was added to the attic that topped the central arch.

Four niches with triangular pediments adorned the facade. They each housed a statue of Hadrian.

1

1 MAIN ARCH

The central part of the monument was formed by a large vaulted arch, around 35 feet high and almost 19 feet wide. On each side was another vaulted arch, each over 16 feet high.

2

2 THE COLUMNS

The central columns each rested on a pedestal in the Attic (Greek) style and had a support decorated with acanthus leaves. Columns also flanked the smaller vaulted arches to each side.

3

3 LATERAL NICHES

The lateral structures were formed by four engaged columns resting on pedestals and topped with Corinthian capitals. The arches of the lower niche flanked a vault formed by a blind wall.



A YOUNG FLUTE PLAYER DEPICTED IN RELIEF, FROM THE SOUTH THEATER AT JERASH

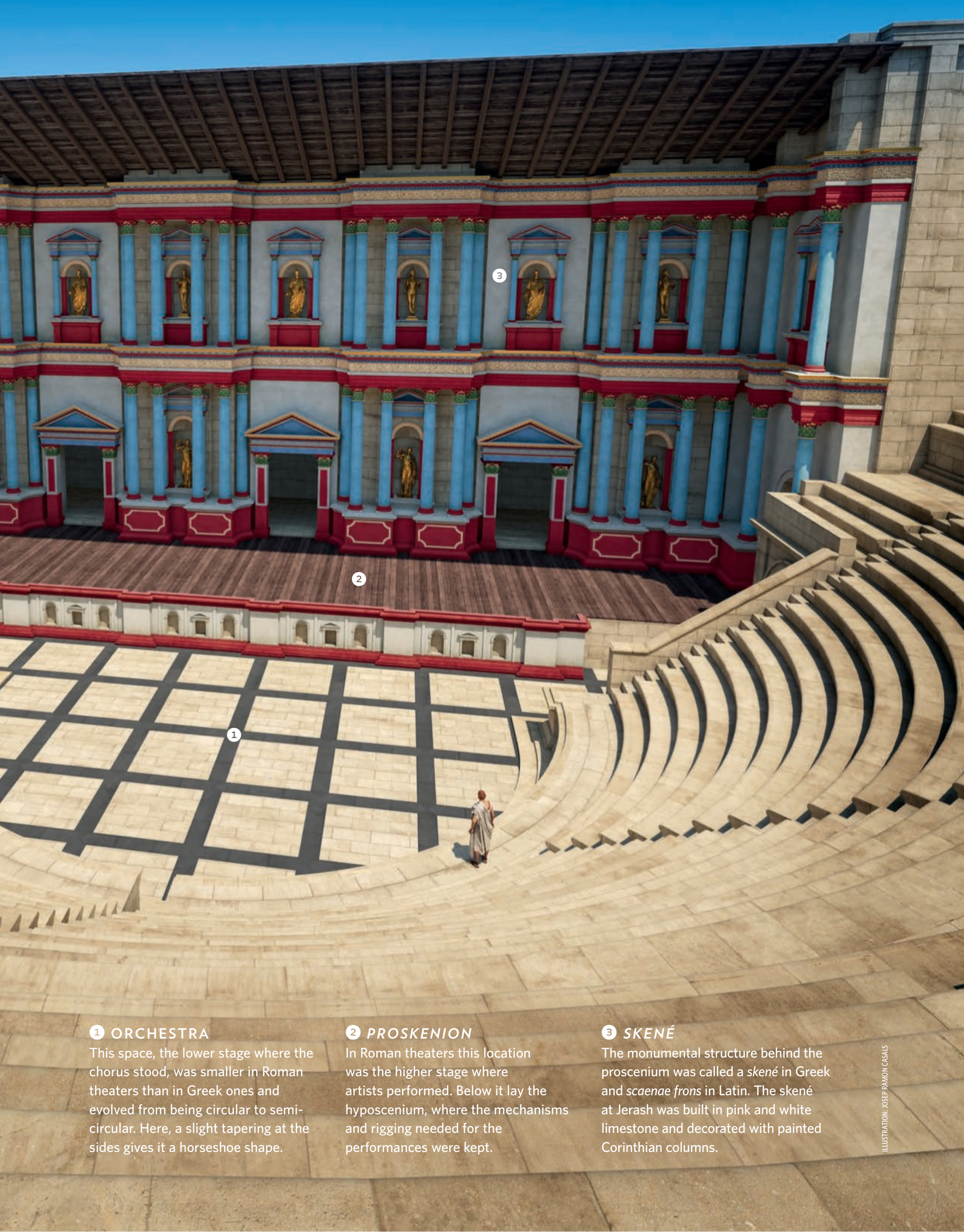
IVAN VDOVIN/AGE FOTOSTOCK

PERFORMANCE ART

JERASH'S SOUTH THEATER is one of the most remarkable of all Roman theaters in the ancient world. With the capacity to hold 3,000 spectators, it was erected at the end of the first century A.D. during the reign of Emperor Domitian and was embellished and remodeled by his successors, Trajan and Hadrian. Located near the hill of the Temple of Zeus-Jupiter, the theater displays typical Roman features: an orchestra (lower stage) and three classical entrances of the *skené* (scene house) behind it. Seated according to their social status, spectators could use theatergoing to show off their wealth. Many of the theater's running costs were paid for by the rich. An inscription notes that one T. Flavius paid 3,000 drachmas for the installation of a section of seating. Through such patronage, the wealthy secured themselves the best seats as well as their own entrance, separate from that used by the rank and file. The common viewers entered by a different

access known as a *vomitorium* (so named because it "vomited" people out after the spectacle ended). Performances were popular with travelers who would be impressed by the splendor of Jerash's sophistication so far from Rome. ■





❶ ORCHESTRA

This space, the lower stage where the chorus stood, was smaller in Roman theaters than in Greek ones and evolved from being circular to semi-circular. Here, a slight tapering at the sides gives it a horseshoe shape.

❷ PROSKENION

In Roman theaters this location was the higher stage where artists performed. Below it lay the hyposcenium, where the mechanisms and rigging needed for the performances were kept.

❸ SKENÉ

The monumental structure behind the proskenion was called a *skené* in Greek and *scaenae frons* in Latin. The *skené* at Jerash was built in pink and white limestone and decorated with painted Corinthian columns.

LIFE UPON THE STAGE

The South Theater at Jerash was built during the late first-century A.D. reign of Domitian over an older structure. The theater is considered one of the finest examples of Roman architecture in the Middle East.

JOCHEN SCHLENKER/AGE FOTOSTOCK







RELIEFS WITH ORNATE DECORATIONS HAD ONCE FORMED PART OF THE LINTELS OF THE OVAL PLAZA.

ALAMY/ACI

A UNIQUE SPACE

THE SPECTACULAR OVAL FORUM is a feature only found in the eastern Roman Empire. While oval-shaped public spaces can also be seen in other cities of Roman Syria, such as Palmyra, the Oval Plaza of Jerash is prized both for its size and the careful civic planning that allowed it to gracefully link different elements of the city. Built in the first century A.D., possibly as the center of the commercial and civic life of Jerash, it was paved with stones that formed an impressive concentric design. The forum is nearly 300 feet long and more than 250 feet across at its widest point. Around the outside stands a magnificent Ionic colonnade. From here, a newly arrived visitor's eye was drawn to the Cardo Maximus as it cut through the

city to the north. The Temple of Zeus-Jupiter loomed over the western side. Built in the time of Emperor Marcus Aurelius, the temple's double structure on two terraces could be seen all over the city. ■

3





South Theater

4

2

3

1 TETRAPYLON GATE

This magnificent entrance, built in the third century A.D., gave access to the Oval Plaza from the Cardo Maximus, the main north-south artery of Jerash.

2 CENTRAL STATUE

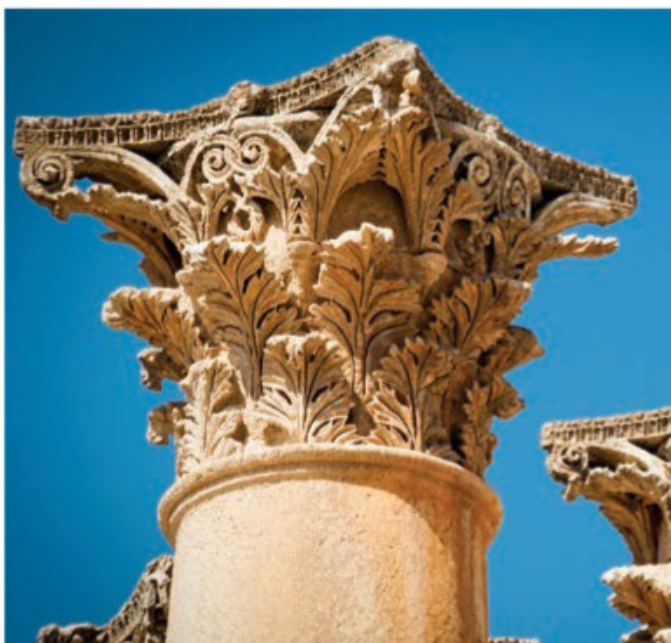
In the center of the Oval Plaza stood a podium with a statue, perhaps of the emperor Hadrian, although this detail cannot be confirmed.

3 COLONNADE

The plaza was surrounded by Ionic columns supporting a portico. It is believed the elliptical design inspired Bernini's design for the colonnade in St. Peter's Square, Rome.

4 TEMPLE OF ZEUS-JUPITER

Atop a hill that rose some 40 feet above the Oval Plaza, the temple was built facing east on a great podium, measuring 135 feet long by 92 feet wide.



A CORINTHIAN CAPITAL BELONGING TO ONE OF THE 11 COLUMNS STILL STANDING AT THE TEMPLE OF ARTEMIS

ALAMY/ACI

IN HONOR OF ARTEMIS

CONSTRUCTION OF THE ARTEMIS TEMPLE began in A.D. 150, during the reign of Antoninus Pius. Artemis, the Greek goddess of hunting (her Roman equivalent is Diana), was the patron goddess of Jerash, and the temple raised in her honor was one of the most impressive sanctuaries of the Middle East. Standing on a podium some 15 feet high, the temple was built to be seen from distant points of the city and the surrounding countryside. The temple complex was vast, and sprawled a third of a mile from its eastern access to the temple itself. It was accessed through a splendid portico, known as the propylaea. After ascending a staircase, visitors would then enter a large sacred precinct or *temenos* (right), enclosed by a portico supported by Corinthian columns. This terrace was where most of the religious ceremonies took place. An altar for sacrifices was placed near the steps leading up to the temple. The six columns in the front row of the temple make it a hexastyle structure. Later, in the Byzantine era, a pottery workshop was installed here and, after the arrival

4

of the Muslims, the walls of the sacred precinct were transformed into a fortress. In the 12th century the crusader king of Jerusalem Baldwin II took over this citadel, by which time the rest of Jerash was already in ruins. ■





1 DECORATION

There is no decoration on the tympanum now, but it may once have been adorned with scenes depicting Artemis as a huntress. At the apex of the pediment is a statue of the goddess, brandishing a bow.

2 HEXASTYLE

Six columns in front, six at the back, and 11 on each side supported the temple. All were Corinthian, decorated with acanthus leaves. It is likely that the columns were originally painted in two colors, but no traces remain today.

3 PORTICO

A large porticoed area was supported by columns surrounding the rectangular perimeter of the temple. Under the arcade, stalls connected with cultic practices would have been set up.



BIG, BAD BOUDICA

BRITAIN REBELS AGAINST ROME



A QUEEN COMMANDS HER PEOPLE
Boudica urges the Britons to defend their country against the Roman invaders. Print by William Sharp, from an engraving by Thomas Stothard, National Portrait Gallery, London

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, LONDON/SCALA, FLORENCE
COLOR: SANTI PÉREZ

Britain had been under Roman control for less than two decades when a massive revolt erupted, led by Boudica, queen of the Iceni people. Thousands of Britons united behind Boudica in A.D. 60 and scored several victories against Roman forces, whose grip on Britannia was in jeopardy.

RICHARD HINGLEY



PROTECTIVE SHIELD

Found in the Thames in 1857, a copper shield (above) dates from 350–50 B.C. Its fine craftsmanship hints at the cultural complexity of Britain's tribal society. British Museum, London

WERNER FORMAN/GTRES

Rebel, queen, warrior, widow, mother, woman—Boudica had many roles in her life despite only appearing in two historical sources, both written by Roman historians. Her leadership of a massive uprising in A.D. 60 not only ensured her a central place in history, but also revealed the complicated relationships between the colonizing Romans and the local population of ancient Britain.

The early second-century work of the Roman historian Tacitus is one of only two sole written sources on Boudica. The other was written in the third century by historian Dio Cassius. Each provides details about the British uprising: the causes, the characters, and the outcomes. These events are conventionally dated from A.D. 60 to 61. Recent research, however, suggests the upheaval may have been over by late A.D. 60, as information in recently discovered Roman writing tablets indicate that Londinium was once again a thriving commercial center at this time.

Readers of the accounts of Boudica's revolt are presented with different perspectives from the two authors. Tacitus presents both sides of the story by describing the provocations endured by the Britons. Although himself a member of the Roman elite, Tacitus was not an admirer of dictatorial government, and he uses the rebellion

to question the manner in which the province was being managed.

One of the most vivid descriptions of Boudica comes from Dio Cassius:

[A]ll this ruin was brought upon the Romans by a woman, a fact which in itself caused them the greatest shame . . . the person . . . who directed the conduct of the entire war, was Buduica [sic], a Briton woman of the royal family and possessed of greater intelligence than often belongs to women.

He re-created the moment when the British warrior queen spoke to a force of 120,000 people. Dio depicts her as tall and terrifying with fierce eyes. Standing on a platform, grasping a spear, an unbound mass of “tawny” hair falling to her hips, she rallied her people to fight against Rome. A golden torque—a symbol of high status in British Iron Age society—encircled her neck. Over her multicolored tunic, she wore a cape fastened by a brooch.

Dio's writing is the only surviving detailed description of a Briton during Roman times, but it should be treated with caution. The source of Dio's information is unknown: It may be largely an invention. Dio depicts Boudica's behavior and appearance—her leadership, loud incitement to battle, and her stature—as outrageous for a woman by Roman standards. She grasps a spear, a martial aspect also deemed incompatible with feminine values. His depiction of her loose hair and colorful clothing was meant to shock audiences of his time,



“BOUDICA AND HER DAUGHTERS”
19TH-CENTURY STATUE
DESIGNED BY THOMAS
THORNYCROFT, NEAR
LONDON'S HOUSES
OF PARLIAMENT
ANTHONY HATLEY/ALAMY/ACI

ROME COMES TO BRITAIN

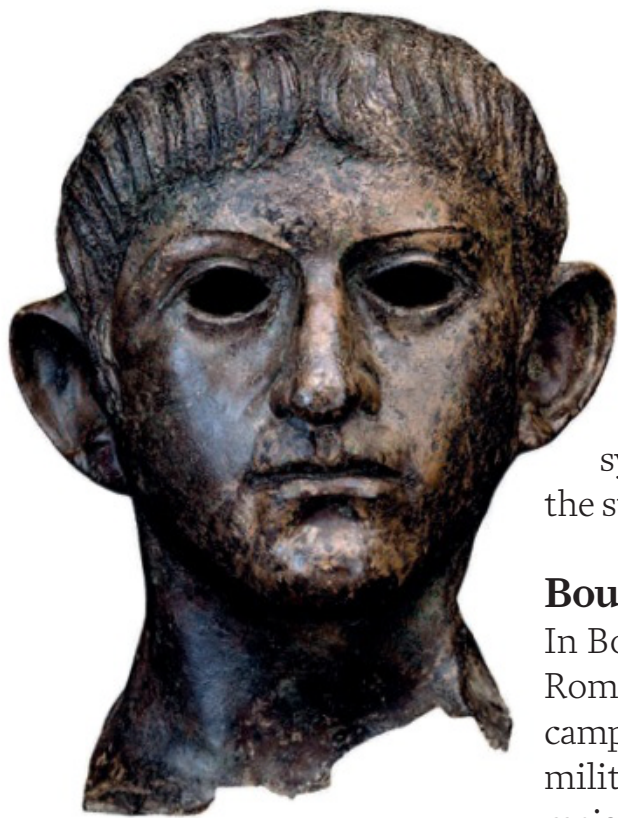
ALTHOUGH JULIUS CAESAR was the first Roman general to set foot in Great Britain, the real occupation of the island began almost 100 years later during the time of the emperor Claudius. In A.D. 43 Roman legions disembarked on the Kent coast. They successfully pacified the Cantiaci (the Roman name for the tribes who lived in the area near modern-day Kent) and the Catuvellauni, who were based north of modern London and whose former capital the Romans called Verulamium (modern St. Albans). Soon

after, Claudius arrived with more troops and was able to take control of Camulodunum (Colchester). Prasutagus, ruler of the Iceni, who lived in what today is East Anglia, collaborated with the Romans. By A.D. 60, however, when Suetonius Paulinus was campaigning in Wales, Prasutagus's widow, Boudica, sparked a revolt alleging mistreatment at the hands of the occupiers. Her rebellion brought destruction down on three major Roman towns before she was routed at an unknown location in the Midlands.



A LEGIONARY
EMBLEM BEARING
THE LEGEND SPQR,
THE INITIAL LETTERS
OF THE LATIN TERM
MEANING "THE
SENATE AND THE
PEOPLE OF ROME."
PHOTO/ISA





TROUBLE AHEAD

The head of Claudius (above) was severed from its statue by Boudica's rebels at Camulodunum. In 1907 it was discovered in a river nearly 40 miles away. British Museum, London

BRITISH MUSEUM/SCALA, FLORENCE

but he had no idea how later generations would embrace it. Writers, artists, and poets found inspiration in Boudica as a symbol of freedom, rebellion, courage, and the strength of Britain.

Boudica's Britain

In Boudica's lifetime Britannia was a young Roman province. The Roman army had been campaigning there since landing a substantial military force in Kent in A.D. 43. Rome won a major victory then that resulted in the surrender of 11 British kings at Colchester in Essex. So important was this new territory that Emperor Claudius himself traveled from Rome to witness the victory, accompanied by important members of the Roman Senate and an entourage that included war elephants.

In the first century A.D. the population of ancient Britain was made up of a large number of independent peoples, or tribes. Boudica's husband, Prasutagus, ruled the Iceni. Historians report that the pair were parents to two daughters and that Prasutagus was not hostile to Rome. Some scholars believe that the Romans may have appointed Prasutagus as a client ruler in their Icenian territory after the invasion of 43. If so, it is likely that both he and his family would have regarded themselves as allies of Rome.

Boudica's husband died, and Roman officials were upset to learn that he had not bequeathed his holdings to Rome. Instead, he left half of his wealth and territory to his daughters and the other half to Emperor Nero. Indignant Roman imperial administrators ignored his final wishes. They seized all Prasutagus's property. They publicly beat the widow Boudica and raped her daughters. These outrages against the Iceni and their queen enraged the people. Tacitus describes how a neighboring tribe, the Trinovantes, joined the Iceni. Many others followed soon after.

The temple at Camulodunum had been built in classical Roman style and was sacred to the cult of Claudius the Emperor. Boudica's followers left no stone standing.



BRITONS ATTACK

In this contemporary illustration by Peter Dennis, Boudica's rebels clash with Roman occupants of Camulodunum (Colchester), who are trying to defend the temple.

PETER DENNIS/OSPREY PUBLISHING

In the speech attributed to her by Dio Cassius, Boudica rallies her forces and prepares them for war. She sets out the causes for the revolt:

[A]lthough some among you may previously, through ignorance of which was better, have been deceived by the alluring promises of the Romans, . . . you have learned how great a mistake you made in preferring an imported despotism to your ancestral mode of life, and you have come to realize how much better is poverty with no master than wealth with slavery.

She rails against Roman avarice and the heavy taxes levied against the population. Boudica then calls for unity among the people in this fight against tyranny:



[L]et us, my countrymen and friends and kinsmen—for I consider you all kinsmen, seeing that you inhabit a single island and are called by one common name—let us, I say, do our duty while we still remember what freedom is, that we may leave to our children not only its appellation but also its reality. For, if we utterly forget the happy state in which we were born and bred, what, pray, will they do, reared in bondage?

United behind their queen, the Britons would rise up and savage several Roman settlements.

The First Victories

Boudica's forces, which may have included female warriors, began their attack at Camulodunum, the Roman colony at Colchester in eastern

TEMPLE OF DOOM

THE HISTORIAN TACITUS explains how the legionary veterans in Camulodunum (Colchester) inspired hatred among the Trinovantes in whose territory they settled. "The troops drove the Trinovantes from their homes and land and called them prisoners and slaves." According to Tacitus, the Britons saw the colony's great temple, dedicated to the emperor Claudius, as "a citadel of eternal domination." The Trinovantes were particularly indignant as they had been forced to pay large sums to fund the imperial cult.

THE REBELS STORMED THE COLONY, which had no defensive wall to protect it and relied on just a small military force. Owing to a lack of resources, the inhabitants had not dug trenches or put up fences to secure the city. All that the Roman inhabitants could do was to take shelter in the Temple of Claudius, which may not even have been completed. The colony fell rapidly to Boudica's rebels, who destroyed the hated symbol and those within it.



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③

WARRIOR QUEEN

When depicting people from the past, artists often turn to historical documents and archaeology in search of details about someone's features, garments, and possessions. To create a portrait of Boudica for the cover of *National Geographic History*, the artist turned to the ancient accounts of Roman historians (in particular, the second- and third-century Greco-Roman author Dio Cassius) and archaeological evidence to create a vivid depiction of the Iceni queen.

ILLUSTRATION: ALMUDENA CUESTA

④

⑤

① APPEARANCE

Dio Cassius describes Boudica as tall and imposing with a “great mass of the tawniest hair [that] fell to her hips.” Her gaze was “fierce.”

② SACKED CITY

A 2001 excavation of Camulodunum (Colchester) found evidence of burned structures dating to the time of Boudica's sacking of the capital.

③ BLAST OF A CARNYX

On British battlefields from the first century A.D., archaeologists have found remains of a long horn, called a carnyx, which Boudica's forces carry here.

④ A GOOD OMEN

The pelt alludes to a ritual described by Dio Cassius, in which Boudica releases a live hare, whose choice of direction predicts the battle's outcome.

⑤ FEARSOME STANCE

Dio Cassius wrote of Boudica's intimidating presence: “She grasped a spear to aid her in terrifying all beholders.”

REPLICA OF THE DESKFORD CARNYX,
FOUND IN SCOTLAND BETWEEN
A.D. 80 AND 200

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF SCOTLAND



GOLDEN RULE

Tacitus describes Boudica wearing a torque, a feature of Celtic warrior dress. Weighing just over two pounds, the Snettisham Great Torque (above) is made from an alloy of gold, silver, and copper. 150-50 B.C. British Museum, London

E. LESSING/ALBUM

England. This settlement was the principal cultural symbol of Roman power in Britain; here, Claudius had accepted the surrender of British kings in A.D. 43. Camulodunum had been the main Roman military base until A.D. 50, when the fortress was replaced by a Roman colony—a town with houses, public buildings, and industrial premises, frequented by traders.

The massive and impressive stone temple, built in classical Roman style and sacred to the cult of Claudius the Emperor, had been constructed at Camulodunum to commemorate his conquest. Boudica's followers completely burned this edifice, leaving no stone standing. The bronze statue of the emperor Claudius that probably stood in a public space such as the forum in Camulodunum was furiously decapitated by the Britons. In 1907 the head was discovered in the River Alde in Suffolk, nearly 40 miles from Colchester, and is now displayed in the British Museum.

After ambushing and defeating a unit of the Roman Ninth Legion sent to protect the colony, the Britons moved southwest toward Londinium. Swiftly established on the banks of the Thames after A.D. 43, the future British capital city was the second most important urban center in the developing imperial province. With a population of perhaps around 9,000 people, it was founded as a trading port for bringing people and goods into Britannia. The Roman governor of Britannia, Gaius Suetonius Paulinus, marched to Londinium but decided not to engage the Britons in battle there. Many inhabitants fled before the settlement was ferociously laid to waste.

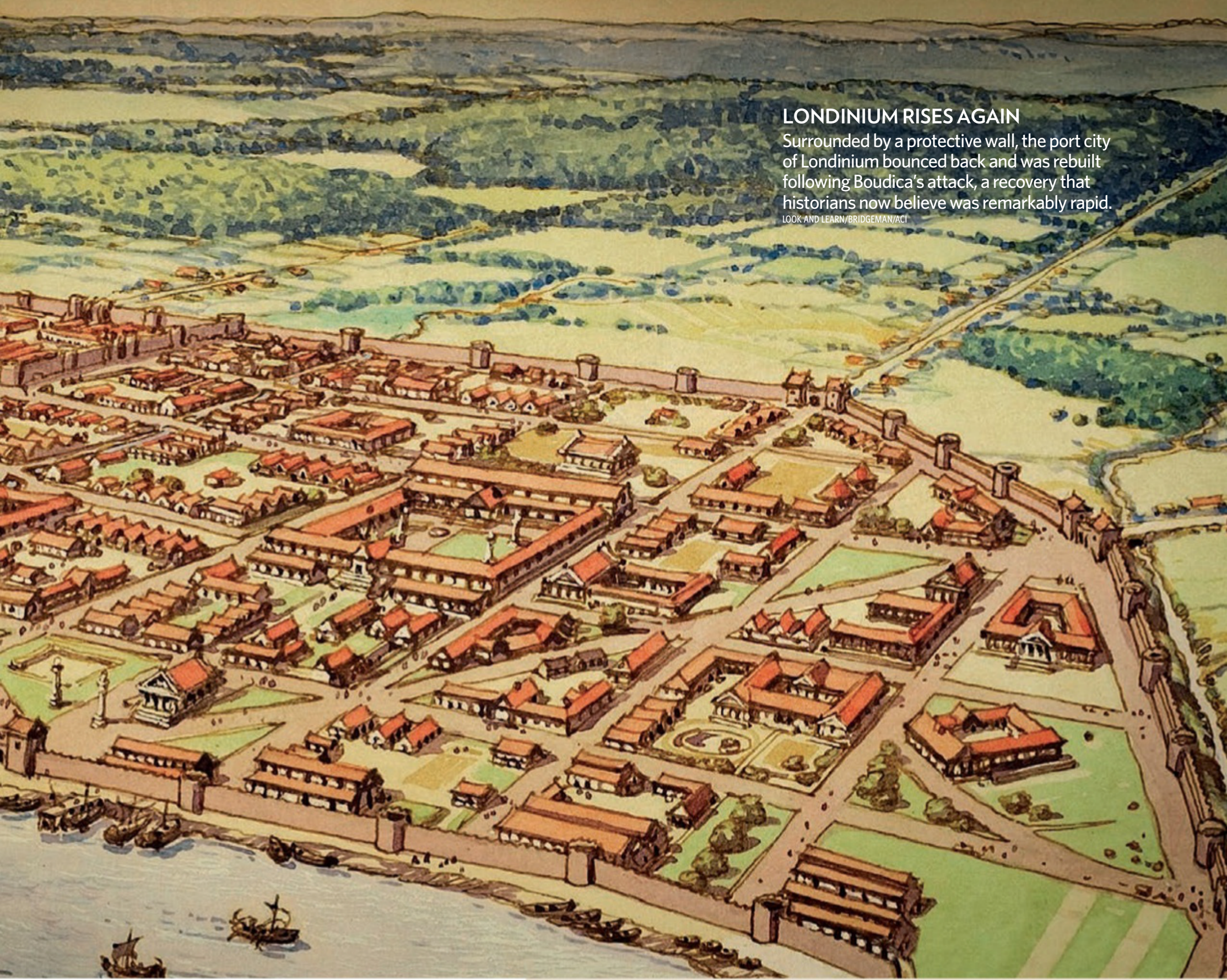
Tacitus described how the next settlement to fall to the ire of Boudica's troops was Verulamium, a Roman town near what is today

Across London, Colchester, and St. Albans, archaeologists have discovered thick layers of burning dating to A.D. 60, a testament to the intensity of the fury of Boudica's rebels.



St. Albans in Hertfordshire. Whereas the already attacked Camulodunum was a colony of Roman citizens, and Londinium was the main port of the province with a population including many overseas traders, Verulamium was a "native" town. At this settlement, Britons who were allies of the Romans were constructing a new urban development on the Roman model.

Across London, Colchester, and St. Albans, archaeologists have uncovered thick layers of burning dating to A.D. 60, a testament to the fury of the British reaction to Roman domination. Tacitus wrote of the barbarous treatment of the townspeople by the Britons, remarking that it had been reckoned that a total of 70,000 Romans and provincials were killed at Camulodunum, Londinium, and Verulamium.



LONDINIUM RISES AGAIN

Surrounded by a protective wall, the port city of Londinium bounced back and was rebuilt following Boudica's attack, a recovery that historians now believe was remarkably rapid.

LOOK AND LEARN/BRIDGEMAN/ACI

Quashing the Revolt

Suetonius Paulinus, Britannia's governor, was a senior member of the Roman elite. Suetonius Paulinus was born in Rome and had served in other provinces before being appointed governor of Britain circa A.D. 58. Provincial governors in the Roman Empire were responsible for the management of the territory and military control.

Shortly before Boudica's rebellion, Suetonius Paulinus had been called away to Mona, a druid stronghold on the large island of Anglesey off the northwestern coast of Wales. Tacitus described how the Romans were "welcomed" by black-robed women on the opposite shore who cursed the Roman soldiers as they attempted to cross the water. This attack on the Druids' sacred island presumably escalated the anger felt

LONDON'S COMMERCIAL CONCEPTION

LONDINIUM, modern-day London, had been founded soon after Claudius's troops began their conquest of Britain in A.D. 43. The settlement was located on the north bank of the River Thames, and a bridge linked it with the opposite bank. Tacitus described Londinium as "a place not dignified with the name of a colony, but the chief residence of merchants, and the great mart of trade and commerce." While Camulodunum (Colchester) just over 50 miles away was an enclave of imperial prestige, Londinium was the focus of the province's economic activity. Like Camulodunum, Londinium was initially unwalled and for that reason fell quickly when Boudica's forces attacked. Dio Cassius describes in his *Roman History* how the inept and "rapacious" procurator Catus Decianus, whose outrageous economic demands had so exasperated the Iceni, was forced to flee from Londinium to the Continent.



FAST FIGHTING

At the time of his invasion in 55-54 B.C., Julius Caesar reported the Britons' use of chariots, as shown on a Roman denarius, minted around 48 B.C. (above), bearing a Celtic warrior on a chariot. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

by the Britons. When word reached him of Boudica's revolt in southern Britain, the governor was then compelled to withdraw and head southeast. After deciding not to engage with the rebels near Londinium, Suetonius Paulinus prepared to battle with Boudica at another site.

He chose to deploy a force of around 10,000 men drawn from the 14th and 20th Legions, supplemented by auxiliary soldiers, in a valley backed by woodland. The Romans were outnumbered by the Britons, who were so confident of victory that they had stationed their families overlooking the battle site.

The exact location of the final battle has been the subject of speculation. It is likely that the clash took place in the Midlands of modern-day England, sometime after the Britons had sacked Verulamium and were moving northwest along the Roman highway known as Watling Street. Tacitus wrote that Boudica and her daughters drove around the battlefield in a chariot shouting to her armies to rile them up:

Behold the proud display of warlike spirits, and consider the motives for which we draw the avenging sword. On this spot we must either conquer, or die with glory. There is no alternative. Though a woman, my resolution is fixed: the men, if they please, may survive with infamy, and live in bondage.

The contest that followed was heated, as Dio Cassius described: "They contended for a long time, both parties being animated by the same zeal and daring. But finally, late in the day, the Romans prevailed." Tacitus's more detailed account gives the impression that Boudica's passionate followers were effectively defeated by Roman discipline:

The Britons brought into the field an incredible multitude. They formed no regular line of battle. Detached parties and loose battalions displayed their numbers, in frantic transport bounding with exultation, and so sure of victory, that they placed their wives in wagons at the extremity of the plain, where they might survey the scene of action, and behold the wonders of British valour.

Apparently 80,000 Britons, including women, were killed, while Roman casualties amounted to around 400 dead and a few more wounded. Following their victory, the Roman military probably disposed of the British dead in large pits or incinerated their bodies. The only trace of this battle might be large pits filled with dismembered skeletons or broken weapons. Perhaps one day this place will be found.

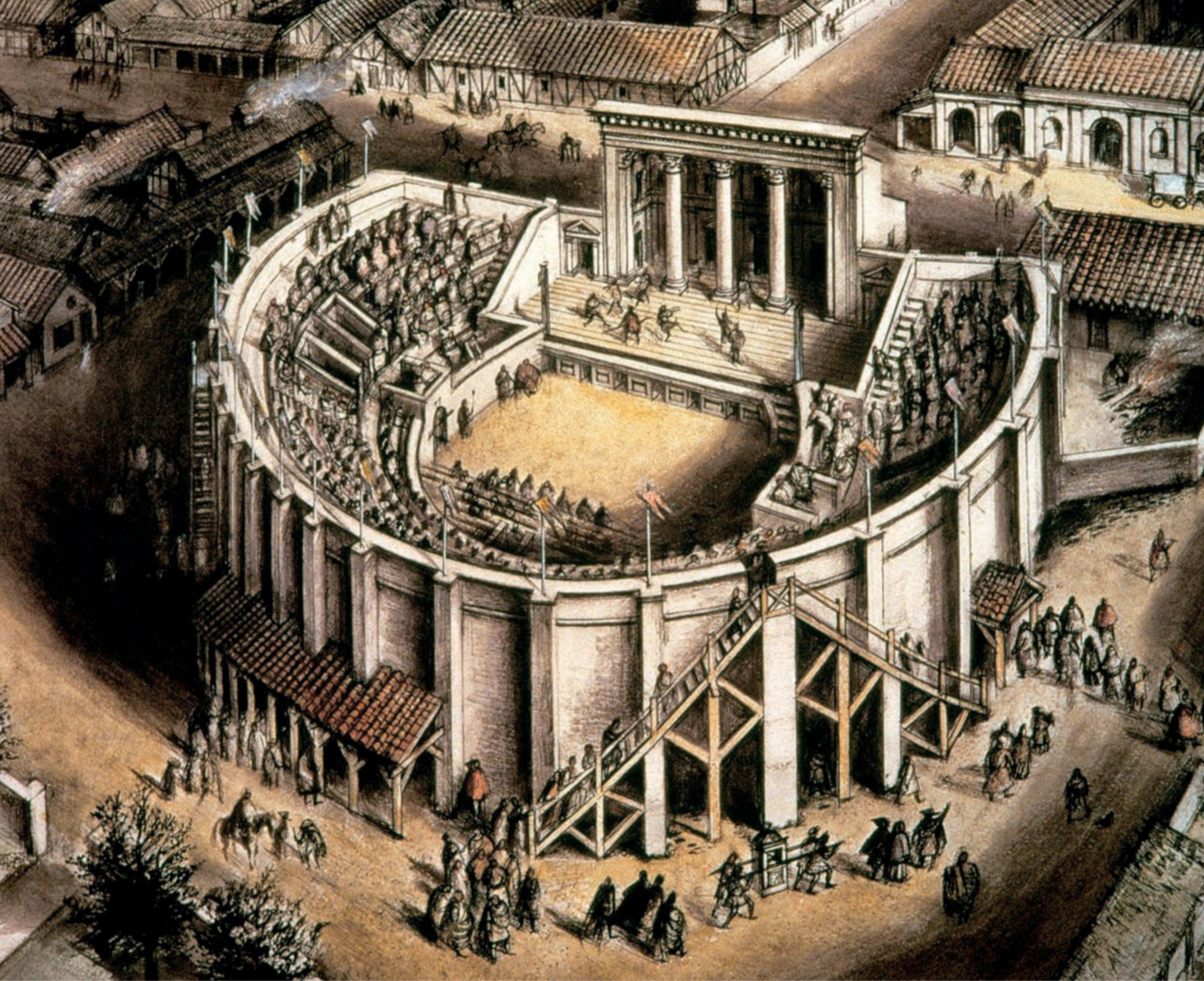
Boudica's Fate

What happened to Boudica is unknown. Tacitus wrote that she poisoned herself. Dio Cassius' account is very different. He wrote that Boudica fell ill and died, and was given an elaborate burial. From the 16th to the 19th century, generations of antiquarians searched for the burial place of the warrior queen, with targets including Stonehenge and even Charing Cross Station in London. There is, however, little information available about Iceni funerary rituals. Some tribes in Iron Age Britain placed their dead in special places to be desiccated by the elements rather than cremated or interred; if the Iceni followed this practice, then nothing would remain of the queen.

The Roman reprisals for the British rebellion were severe, and Tacitus described how settlements were ravaged by fire and sword. Although archaeological evidence of Roman actions after Boudica's defeat has been difficult to find, recent excavations in London have located a fort in the city's financial district. It was constructed to serve as the base for troops brought in from Germany to assist Suetonius Paulinus in his campaign to restore order to the province.

Londinium recovered quickly. A letter from A.D. 62, referring to a consignment of goods to be transported from Verulamium to London, indicates that the market at Londinium had been swiftly rebuilt after its destruction by the rebels.

Boudica's story may have been forgotten were it not for the rediscovery of Tacitus's writings in the Renaissance, when she was regarded as a parallel to Queen Elizabeth I.



In the aftermath Emperor Nero may have considered withdrawing Rome from Britain altogether, although he evidently changed his mind.

The rebellion's immediate influence is uncertain: No written records of these events have survived apart from those of Tacitus and Dio Cassius. The Romans resumed their conquest of Britain, and by A.D. 84 the governor, Gnaeus Julius Agricola, had conquered much of the north. The Romans failed to conquer the Scottish Highlands and by the second century the province of Britannia came to comprise the area to the south of Hadrian's Wall.

Boudica's story may well have been forgotten were it not for the rediscovery of Tacitus's writings in the 16th century during the European Renaissance of the arts. Rather than a savage,

Boudica was regarded as a parallel to the reigning queen of England, Elizabeth I. The Victorians later reinvented Boudica as a valiant upholder of British nationhood. The most famous rendition of her from this period was the statue "Boudica and Her Daughters," designed by Thomas Thornycroft, installed at Westminster Bridge in London as an enduring symbol of British spirit and strength. ■

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Learn more

BOOKS

Boudica: Iron Age Warrior Queen
Richard Hingley and Christina Unwin,
Bloomsbury Academic, 2006.

RIISING FROM THE ASHES

The construction of the second-century theater at Verulamium (above) took place when the city was rebuilt after Boudica's devastating attack.

VERULAMIUM MUSEUM/BRIDGEMAN/ACI

FINAL BATTLE

Tacitus provides details of the battleground where the Romans finally finished off Boudica's revolt: "a position approached by a narrow defile, closed in at the rear by a forest." Some historians argue the "defile" is the River Anker near Mancetter, in Warwickshire, England. This illustration is based on a site near Mancetter that matches Tacitus's description of the spot. The configuration of the two armies is also based on Tacitus's account.

③ COUNTERATTACK
Having exhausted all their projectiles, the Roman legionaries together with the auxiliary infantry and cavalry units make their counterattack. The mounted troops mow down the rebel forces.

① DEFENSIVE STAND
Protected by the forest, legionaries and auxiliaries hold back the rebels by hurling lances at them.

② BRITISH ATTACK
Organized into tribal groupings, the Britons, who also use chariots, launch themselves into battle against the well-organized Roman defense.

NO MERCY

The victorious Romans finished the day with a slaughter, a common occurrence in ancient battles. Most people were killed after the battle was already won; victors showed no mercy to the defeated. According to Tacitus: "Our soldiers spared not to slay even the women, while the very beasts of burden, transfixed by the missiles, swelled the piles of bodies." Britannia governor Suetonius Paulinus then unleashed pitiless reprisals, aided by 2,000 legionaries, eight auxiliary cohorts, and 1,000 horsemen sent from Germany by Emperor Nero. But Suetonius's troubled rule was short-lived, and before the end of A.D. 61 Nero had replaced him with a new governor.

FIRST-CENTURY CELTIC
HELMET. BRITISH
MUSEUM, LONDON
AKG/ALBUM



4 TRAPPED
After the Roman counterattack, the rebels try to retreat but cannot flee because their escape routes are blocked by chariots they had left with the rear guard.

REBELS

- 1** War chariots
- 2** Tribal forces
- 3** Wagons

ROMANS

- A** Legions
- B** Auxiliary infantry
- C** Auxiliary cavalry



THRILLING TALES

Marco Polo carries his popular book *Il Milione*, known in English as the *Travels of Marco Polo*, in this 19th-century mosaic in the Doria-Tursi Palace, Genoa. Opposite: The Polos take leave of Kublai Khan in a 15th-century miniature.

MOSAIC: LEEIMAGE/GETTY IMAGES MINIATURE: AKG/ALBUM

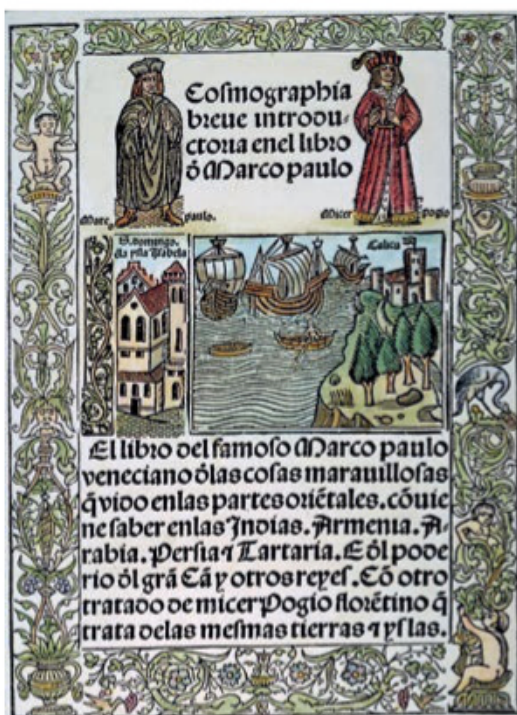
THERE AND BACK AGAIN

The Travels of Marco Polo



Marco Polo's account of his odyssey to China became one of the world's first best-selling books, and not just for its fantastic tales. Its commercial details awoke Europeans to the possibilities of global trade two centuries before the age of discovery.

ANTONIO RATTI



TITLE PAGE OF A 1503 SPANISH EDITION OF THE *TRAVELS OF MARCO POLO*. THE VENETIAN EXPLORER IS DEPICTED AT THE TOP LEFT.

GRANGER/ALBUM

The world-famous explorer Marco Polo is credited with many things, but perhaps the greatest is compiling one of the world's first best-selling travelogues. Published around 1300, the book chronicles his experiences during a 24-year odyssey from Venice to Asia and back again.

Polo did not write down his adventures himself. Shortly after his return to Venice in 1295, Polo was imprisoned by the Genoese, enemies of the Venetians, when he met a fellow prisoner, a writer from Pisa named Rusticiano. Polo told his stories to his new friend, who wrote them down and published them in a medieval language known as Franco-Italian.

Although the original manuscript is lost, more than 100 illuminated copies have survived from the Middle Ages. Many of these are of great beauty, but there are significant discrepancies among them. The work came to be known as *Il Milione*, perhaps based on a well-known nickname of Polo's. In the English-speaking world, the book is often known as the *Travels of Marco Polo*.

The Bodleian Library in Oxford, England, holds one of the earliest versions, dating from about 1400. Gorgeously rendered, the Bodleian copy contains what many scholars consider to be an authoritative text. It tells the story, beginning in 1271, of an odyssey undertaken by a trio of Venetians, who traveled through extraordinary lands and into places where few

MICHAEL YAMASHITA/NGS



MAPPING THE MODERN WORLD

Using information given by Marco Polo in his *Travels*, Venetian monk Fra Mauro created this map of the world around 1450, more than a century after Marco Polo's works had been published. Now held in the Marciana National Library in Venice, it shows a world whose contours were growing more precise and detailed than Europeans had ever known before.



A PORTRAIT OF KUBLAI KHAN ON SILK, PAINTED IN 1294, SHORTLY AFTER HIS DEATH. NATIONAL PALACE MUSEUM, TAIPEI
AKG/ALBUM

Christians had ever been, all the way to the court of the Mongolian emperor, Kublai Khan.

The names of the places they traveled—Hormuz, Balkh, and Kashgar—became for Europeans indelible parts of a new mental map of the world. Although fantastic legends and rumors from such far-off places had filtered through to Europe on the numerous east-west trading routes of the Silk Road, Polo's eye brought them alive in a new way. He wrote of fabulous things, but also of everyday matters relating to commerce.

His book became a best seller, spreading throughout the Italian Peninsula in a matter of months—a remarkable feat in an age before Gutenberg's invention of the printing press around 1439. Polo's book reawakened Europe to the possibilities of international trade and expansion, and became a text that heavily influenced the age of discovery that dawned in Europe two centuries later.

Mongolian Rule

Marco Polo was born in 1254, at a time when Europe was looking not westward to the Atlantic, but eastward with fascination and trepidation. By this time, Mongol hordes had reached Hungary. By the time of the Polos' great journey 17 years later, the Mongol empire had reached its maximum. Its north-west component, the Khanate of the Golden Horde, stretched as far west as the Danube River in central Europe. The easternmost





VENETIAN SEND-OFF

A 15th-century illustration from Marco Polo's *Travels*, held by the Bodleian Library, Oxford, shows the Polos' departure from Venice. St. Mark's Basilica with its four bronze horses is recognizable (left) and alongside it is the Doge's Palace. In front are the columns of St. Theodore and St. Mark, topped by a winged lion. The inclusion of exotic animals (lower left) hints at the wondrous thing to come on their epic voyage.

MATERIAL FROM THE RUINS OF KARAKORUM, THE ANCIENT CAPITAL OF THE MONGOL EMPIRE, WAS LATER USED TO BUILD THE 16TH-CENTURY MONASTERY OF THE ERDENE ZUU MONASTERY.

SUPERSTOCK/AGE FOTOSTOCK



TRAILBLAZING FRIARS

THE POLOS were not the first Westerners to penetrate the vast Mongolian domains, nor even to meet the ruling khan of the day. One pioneer was the Franciscan friar Giovanni da Pian del Carпинi, who in 1246, on behalf of Pope Innocent IV, arrived at the court of Güyük (the third Great Khan) after a lengthy and arduous trip by land. Equally significant was the experience of Willem van Ruysbroeck, a Flemish friar, who in 1254 made it to Karakorum, the capital of Möngke (the fourth Great Khan), as an emissary of Louis IX, king of France. Unlike Marco Polo's account, however, the reports of the roving friars did not find a wide public, and did not shape the European imagination to such an extent.



part of the empire stretched to Asian shores of the Pacific.

The largest contiguous land empire the world had ever known emerged from a group of warring tribes. In 1206 a single leader, Temüjin, was elected Genghis Khan (meaning “Universal Ruler”) after he won a series of victories over his rivals. Temüjin enjoyed unprecedented control over what is now Mongolia. With the accession of this fearsome leader, the federation of tribes began expanding their strongholds beyond the Mongolian steppe.

They first turned east, to the kingdoms of north and western China, eventually reaching Beijing, which fell to them in 1215. From then on, state after state across China and Central Asia was absorbed into the expanding Mongol



Travels of Marco Polo (1271-1295)

- Outbound: Italy to China
- ← Homeward: China to Italy

empire. The Mongols even raided lands in southern Russia.

At the time of Genghis's death in 1227, Mongol horsemen patrolled the shores of both the Caspian and China seas; they were in Siberia, Tibet, and the central Chinese plains. They were also present along the Silk Road, a great artery of trade, commerce, and information.

From 1236, the Mongols began to look farther west and turned their attention to Europe. In a series of shatteringly aggressive campaigns, they stormed through what is now Ukraine and Poland, taking Kiev in 1240 and sacking Krakow the following year. A successful invasion of Hungary opened the way for Mongol armies to enter Austria, raiding south of Vienna. Here they were at last turned back.

Word of the speed of Mongolian conquests and the apparent invincibility of their horsemen spread throughout Europe. When Polo set out on his journey, there would still have been many survivors of the Mongol invasions. Even so, fear of Genghis Khan was mixed with curiosity about his people. Some enterprising Europeans even had hunches that money could be made through more contact with the Mongolians.

When Polo set out on his journey, there would still have been many people with firsthand memories of the scale of the violence that the Mongols had unleashed.

GRAND TOUR

Beginning in 1271, Polo's 24-year round trip (above) logged more than 20,000 miles.

EOSGIS.COM/NG MAPS



CHINESE CHRISTIANS

Kublai Khan was intrigued by European religion and would have been aware of Christian communities already established in China. The Xi'an monument (above), erected in A.D. 781, cites the arrival of the Nestorian Christians in Xi'an, capital of the Tang, in 635.

AKG/ALBUM

A Family of Travelers

Europe's great seafaring republic, Venice, maintained a vast network of trading contacts throughout the Mediterranean and Middle East. It was poised to begin expanding its trade network eastward. Venice was home to merchants with an in-depth knowledge of the East and among the best placed to chase riches. Throughout the medieval period, they traveled the routes east to Trebizond, the gateway to the Silk Road (located in today's Trabzon in modern Turkey). Goods moved between China and Europe along this route.

Although Polo's pioneering *Travels* awakened mass interest in the lands of the East, he was by no means the first European to travel into the heart of the Mongol lands.

Marco Polo came from a family of merchants. When he was a small child, his father Niccolò and uncle Maffeo were already amassing some remarkable travel experiences. The shrewd traders had left Venice in 1261 to forge new relationships in the East. The pair had met the Mongolian khan as part of this first epic journey.

One of the Polos' commercial bases was Constantinople, where their brother, Marco senior, worked. Their agents operated up the Volga River into Bukhara. It was there in modern Uzbekistan that Niccolò and Maffeo had pulled off a major diplomatic feat: They met members of Kublai Khan's government and arranged an expedition to his court in Shangdu (in Inner Mongolia in modern China).

Their meeting with Kublai Khan was one of history's great encounters between East and West. In the khan, the two Venetians found a man whose curiosity about the West matched theirs about the East. The relationship they built with the Mongols made the brothers pioneering intermediaries, a conduit through which knowledge of Europe and China could travel in both directions.

Intrigued by what the brothers told him about Europe (and especially about Christianity), the khan asked them to return to Europe and petition the pope to send learned men to teach the Mongols about Christianity. The Polos' return home was long and arduous. Things became more complicated when they reached Acre (in modern Israel) and learned that Pope Clement IV had died, and there was no elected successor.

The brothers continued back to Venice, where they would await a new pope and plan their return to the court of Kublai Khan. This time, they would bring Niccolò's son, Marco. A boy when the father had last seen him 10 years ago, he was now a young man at 17 years old.

To the Court of Khan

In 1271 father, son, and uncle left Venice and sailed to Acre. From there they swung northeast, taking a route that stretched overland through eastern Anatolia and Armenia to Tabriz, in present-day Azerbaijan. Next they



**MOUNT ARARAT IN THE
ARMENIAN HIGHLANDS
OF EASTERN TURKEY**
TUUL AND BRUNO MORANDI/GTRES

headed south through the Iranian highlands, skirting Baghdad, aiming for the Strait of Hormuz, from where they intended to take a ship across the Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean all the way to China.

Inspection of the available boats, however, alarmed them. They were, Polo would later describe in his *Travels*, “wretched affairs . . . only stitched together with twine made from the husk of the Indian nut.” In the end, they decided to make the journey by land.

Marco Polo was always interested in the goods a region produced, how it connected with Europe, and how it could connect in the future. Tabriz, for example, “is excellently situated so the goods brought to here come from

ENCOUNTERS IN THE HOLY LAND

ON HIS TRAVEL THROUGH ARMENIA, Polo spotted a landmark that would have been a familiar reference to his European readership: Mount Ararat, a snowcapped, dormant volcano in eastern Turkey, and the peak where the Bible says Noah’s ark rested after the flood. He wrote:

You must know . . . that the Ark of Noah exists on the top of a certain great mountain, on the summit of which snow is so constant that no one can ascend; for the snow never melts, and is constantly added to by new falls. Below, however, the snow does melt, and runs down, producing such rich and abundant herbage that in summer cattle are sent to pasture from a long way round about.



MINERS DIG FOR RUBIES IN THE MOUNTAINS OF BADAKHSHAN, AFGHANISTAN, FROM A 15TH-CENTURY EDITION OF THE *TRAVELS OF MARCO POLO*. BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE, PARIS

AKG/ALBUM

many regions. Latin merchants . . . go there to buy the goods that come from foreign lands.” The Persians, he observes, produce “the best and handsomest carpets in the world.” In Baghdad: “a great river [the Tigris] runs through the midst of it by means of which merchants transport their goods to and from the Sea of India.” These details were important for future trade between Venice and East Asia.

Despite his report on the city, it is unlikely Marco visited Baghdad, as the city had been laid to waste by the Mongols slightly more than a decade before. Neither are historians sure if Marco Polo visited Mosul, although he certainly gathered a lot of information about the city’s textile trade. He described a place called Cipangu with a palace so richly endowed that its floors were lined with gold “more than two fingers thick.” Most historians agree that Cipangu is Japan and that Polo never went there. Much of his account is believed to be secondhand, at best.

Three and a half years traveling through Central Asia brought hardship to the family. Polo later recalled suffering attacks by bandits and severe illness while passing through Afghanistan. After surviving it all, the Polos eventually made their royal rendezvous. Marco Polo, then age 21, became one of a select few to be received by a khan—in this case, the fifth Great Khan, Kublai—at his summer palace at Shangdu.



TUUL AND BRUNO MORANDI/GTRES

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IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ALEXANDER

The ruins of the Yamchun fortress overlook the Panj River that today separates Tajikistan and Afghanistan. Here, in the ancient kingdom of Badakhshan, Marco Polo recovered from illness. Polo relates that the regional rulers claimed descent from Alexander the Great, through his marriage to Barsine, daughter of the Persian emperor Darius III. He also repeats the legend that the region's horses were descended from Alexander's horse, Bucephalus.



By his own account, Marco was popular with Kublai Khan himself, and could speak the khan's tongue. The Polos spent nearly 17 years in his employ in China and its neighboring lands. Marco was sent on many journeys around China, and farther afield to Pagan in modern-day Burma, and to the old Mongolian capital at Karakorum far to the north.

When the time came to return to Europe, the Polos' sea voyage home was another epic journey, taking them through the South China Sea, Vietnam, Malaysia, Sumatra, and Sri Lanka. The Polos rounded the southernmost tip of India and sailed north up the western coast until they disembarked and continued overland to Afghanistan. From here, they slogged through Persia and the Middle East, on to Constantinople, from where they finally sailed for Venice. After an odyssey of 24 years, they arrived home in 1295.

Birth of a Best Seller

Marco Polo's account of his journey became a best seller partly because of its new insights into a faraway part of the world: Although travelers' tales from the lands of the Silk Road had been distributed before, the wealth of information Marco Polo provided on China and its surrounding lands was unprecedented in its time.

The *Travels* became famous, even notorious, for their tall tales. One such story is an account of plants that produced pasta (this latter, however, is almost certainly a misinterpretation; Polo surely knew pasta did not grow on trees!). Nevertheless, the book also spins tales about hungry cannibals and giant unicorns (some believe they were rhinos) who lived on Sumatra. On an island called Angaman (believed to be the Andaman Islands), it describes people with heads like dogs.

Although many accounts in the *Travels* seem based on hearsay, and some are probably fabricated, most historians believe that Polo did indeed reach China.



MAPMAKERS

The Polos cross a desert in Asia in a detail (above) from the "Catalan Atlas" of 1375, a map that drew heavily on details from the *Travels*. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris

ALBUM

Even when the stories are not fabulous, their provenance is often hazy. The only source of information for the Polos' route is Marco's account, and it is not always easy to distinguish between what the family actually saw with their own eyes and what stories they were told by others. With its mix of hearsay and occasionally disjointed, rambling style, episodes of Polo's account have been regarded as a fabrication by some commentators. Even so, most historians consider that Polo's account of his travels in China is based on authentic, lived experience.

The work was also attractive to readers because of its commercial emphasis. Not only did it offer readers strange and fantastic details about faraway places, it also presented practical



information of use to merchants interested in international trade. Polo describes China as a “merchants’ paradise” and includes down-to-earth data on the intricacies of Chinese law.

Polo’s eagerness to record the goods being produced and how they could be transported caught the mood of the times. Information from the *Travels* was useful in improving maps of East Asia, which fed trade relations. Marco Polo’s work also inspired travelers to retrace his steps to China, bringing back yet more information on these lands. This knowledge fueled a growing curiosity about the world as Europe moved into the Renaissance and the age of discovery toward the end of the 1400s. Better navigation enabled eastward as well as westward trade in that feverish period of exploration.

In 1557 the rulers of China’s Ming dynasty allowed Portugal to create a permanent settlement at Macau, and it was from this trading post that the Italian Jesuit priest Matteo Ricci began his attempt to evangelize across China. His profound knowledge of the country enabled him, and fellow Jesuits, to explain Chinese beliefs and customs to the West, continuing the cultural bridge that Marco Polo, his father, and his uncle, had begun building two centuries before. ■

ANCIENT HISTORIAN **ANTONIO RATTI** SPECIALIZES IN THE IRANIAN BRONZE AGE. HIS RECENT STUDIES ALSO INCLUDE NOMADIC SOCIETIES IN CENTRAL ASIA.

Learn more

BOOKS

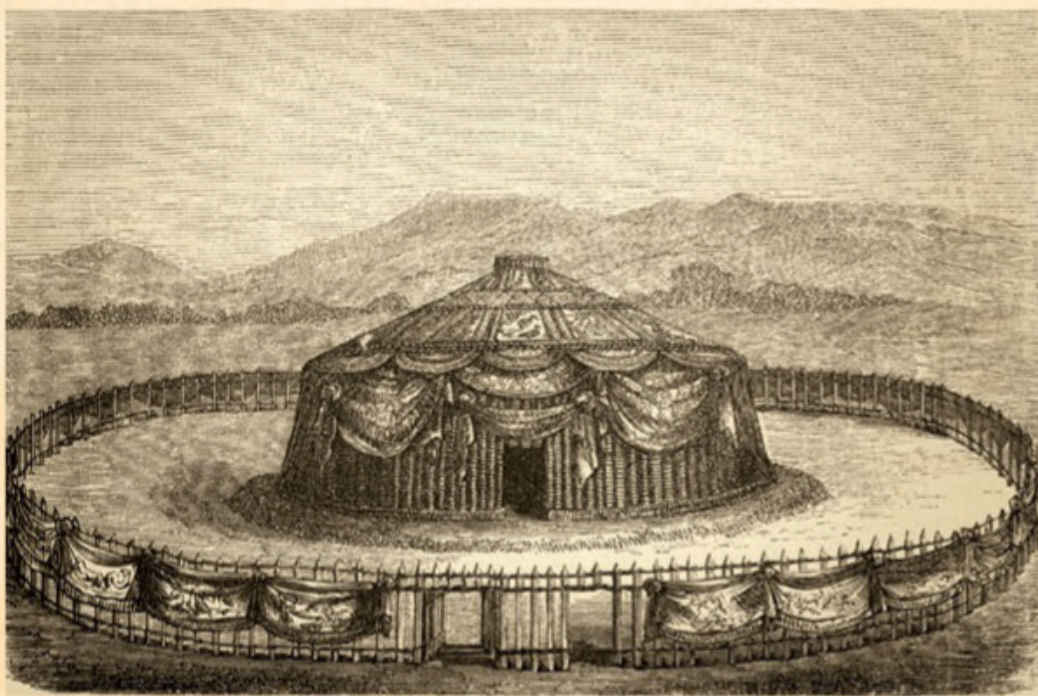
Marco Polo: From Venice to Xanadu
Laurence Bergreen, Alfred A. Knopf, 2007.

SPLENDOR OF KUBLAI KHAN

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan / A stately pleasure-dome decree." The famous opening words of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's 1797 poem were inspired by an account of Shangdu that was based on Marco Polo's *Travels*, and which the Romantic poet had just been reading before falling into an opium-induced vision. Beijing was the capital of the khan's realms, but Shangdu was his summer residence. On seeing it, Polo was awestruck by this lavish marble palace, with golden halls and corridors within magnificent grounds. When the Polos offered Kublai Khan the letters and gifts from Pope Gregory X, including oil from Jerusalem's Church of the Holy Sepulchre, he was delighted and, "bestowed much commendation on the fidelity, the zeal and the diligence of his ambassadors."

A 16-MILE PERIMETER WALL surrounded a beautiful royal park of meadows and streams. Marco Polo describes how the Great Khan would often ride around the grounds with "one of more small leopards carried on horseback." On a given command the leopards would be released and "instantly seize a stag, or goat, or fallow deer, which he gives to his hawks, and in this manner he amuses himself."

IN THE MIDDLE OF A beautiful grove of trees was another marvelous spectacle, an immense, portable pavilion, "constructed with so much ingenuity of contrivance that all the parts may be taken asunder, removed, and again set up, at the majesty's pleasure." The roof of this Cane Palace was made of bamboo, supported upon pillars, each decorated with a dragon.



THE GREAT YURT, OR "CANE PALACE," CONSTRUCTED BY KUBLAI KHAN. IT COULD BE DISMANTLED, PACKED AWAY, AND MOVED TO ANOTHER SITE, AS THE NOMADIC LIFESTYLE REQUIRED.

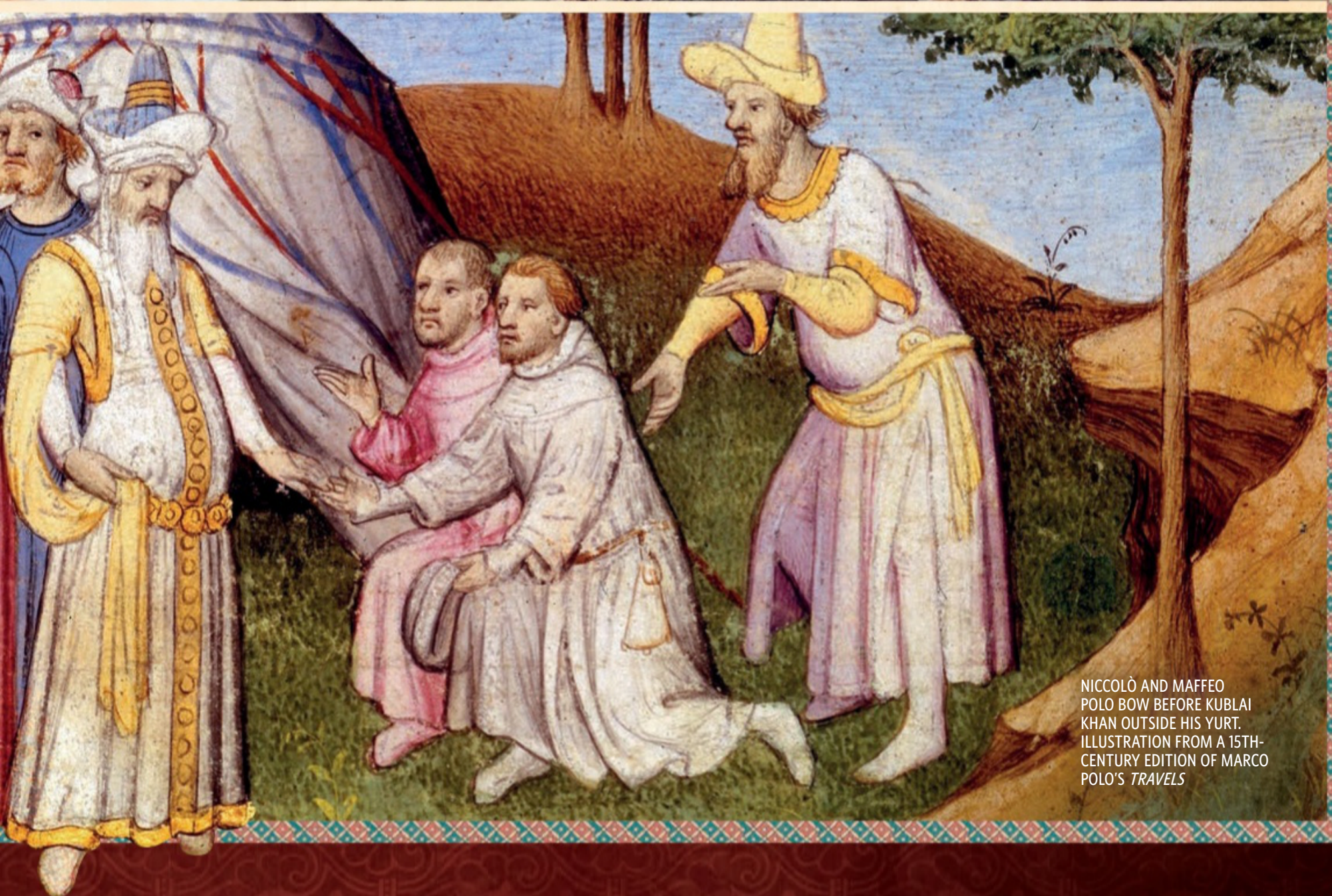
LOOK AND LEARN/BRIDGEMAN/ACI



TOP AND BOTTOM: ALBUM



KUBLAI KHAN RELEASES HIS
FALCON TO FLY OFF IN SEARCH
OF PREY. ILLUSTRATION FROM A
15TH-CENTURY FRENCH EDITION
OF MARCO POLO'S *TRAVELS*



NICCOLÒ AND MAFFEO
POLO BOW BEFORE KUBLAI
KHAN OUTSIDE HIS YURT.
ILLUSTRATION FROM A 15TH-
CENTURY EDITION OF MARCO
POLO'S *TRAVELS*



DEVIL'S CONSPIRACY

KING JAMES AND THE WITCH HUNTS OF SCOTLAND

Fed by religious fervor and a king's fear of black magic, Scotland's witch hunts in the 16th and 17th centuries were among the most intense and violent in Europe.

JULIAN GOODARE



TOIL AND TROUBLE

An engraving reproduces Henry Fuseli's 1783 painting of the witches from Shakespeare's tragedy *Macbeth*. First performed in 1606, the play was a compliment to the newly crowned king of England, James I, who had published a book on witchcraft in 1597.

QUINTLOX/ALBUM

Scotland Under a Spell

1563

Following the Reformation in Scotland, the Scottish Parliament criminalizes witchcraft. There is no immediate surge of prosecutions.

1590-91

People are executed on charges of having met with the devil at North Berwick in a plot to harm King James VI and his new bride, Anne of Denmark.

1597

James VI publishes his book on witchcraft, *Daemonologie*. Six years later, in 1603, he will succeed Queen Elizabeth I as King James I of England.

1628

A spate of witch-burnings in Germany, linked to religious tensions unleashed in the Thirty Years' War, sparks Scotland's third witch panic.

1662

The last intensive witchcraft panic sweeps Scotland. In the years that follow, the state becomes increasingly skeptical about allegations of witchcraft.

1704-05

After the authorities refuse to try would-be witches in the fishing town of Pittenweem, villagers murder a suspect themselves by crushing her.

1736

Nine years after the last execution in Scotland of a convicted witch, the British Parliament repeals the 1562 Witchcraft Act.



DANGEROUS WATERS

Tantallon Castle (above) sits near North Berwick, Scotland, where witches allegedly worked to sink the ships of King James VI and his consort, Queen Anne.

CLEARVIEW/AGE FOTOSTOCK

During the late 1500s Scotland believed the devil was at work in the land. Locals talked about his ability to raise storms, kill livestock, and spread deadly illness. Satan sought to undermine human society from within and was recruiting secret agents to do his bidding. Those diabolical actors were witches, and the authorities believed they had to be eradicated for the sake of the kingdom.

Scotland was not alone in falling victim to witchcraft panics in the late 16th century and first half of the 17th century. Witch-hunting plagued Europe, beginning in the 15th century when the idea that witches worshipped the devil began to take hold. Burgundy, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, and Scandinavia all endured outbreaks of witch panics during this time. After the Reformation divided Europe into Protestant and Catholic in the



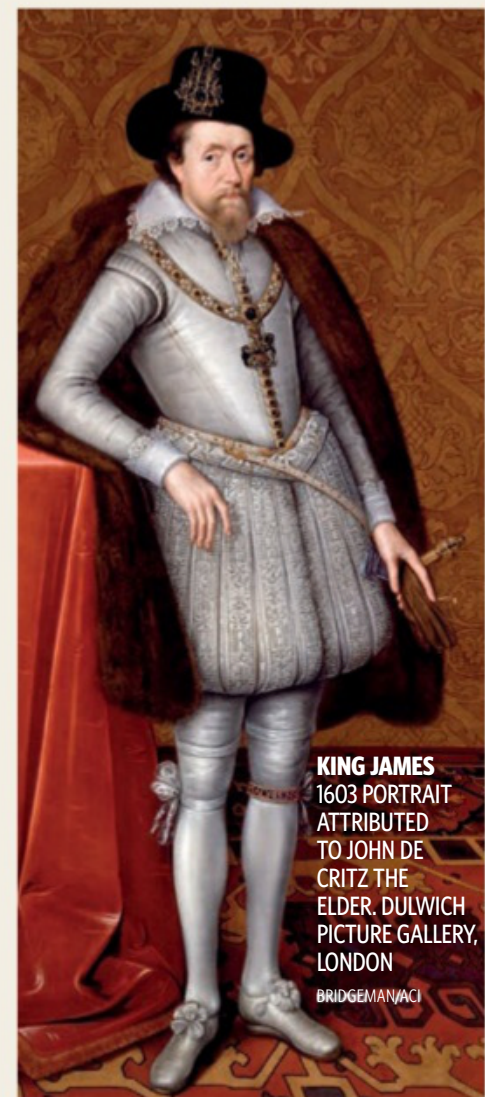
ANNE OF DENMARK IN A 1614 PORTRAIT ATTRIBUTED TO MARCUS GHEERAERTS THE YOUNGER. PALACE OF HOLYROODHOUSE, EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND

BRIDGEMAN/ACI



A SCHOLAR AND A KING

KING JAMES VI of Scotland came to the throne in 1567, at just over a year old, after his mother Mary Queen of Scots was deposed. Unlike his Catholic mother, James was brought up a Protestant. He received an outstanding education and became an able scholar. The young king wrote learnedly on many subjects, including kingship and his God-given right to rule. Various plots and threats spurred him into action to demonstrate to the public his godly superiority over his enemies, which informed his writing of *Daemonologie* in 1597. After becoming James I of England in 1603, he switched his attention toward Catholic plots against his rule.



KING JAMES VI
1603 PORTRAIT
ATTRIBUTED
TO JOHN DE
CRITZ THE
ELDER, DULWICH
PICTURE GALLERY,
LONDON
BRIDGEMAN/ACI

early 16th century, both sides hunted witches. During this period of religious reform, rulers wanted to prove their godliness. They perceived the unholy and evil as the source of unrest and disorder.

Witch-hunting could be seen as an extension of the Protestant Reformation as parish ministers and government authorities sought to create a “godly state” in which everyone worshipped correctly, and sin and ungodliness were wiped out. In numerical terms, Scotland’s witch hunts were severe. Between 1590 and 1662, five intense panics erupted across Scotland: 1590–91, 1597, 1628–1631, 1649–1650, and 1661–62.

As a result of these panics, out of a population of roughly a million people, about 2,500 accused witches, most of them women, were executed, five times the average European execution rate per capita. Scotland’s susceptibility to widespread panic over witches and witchcraft was, in part, determined by the role of one man: the Scottish ruler King James VI, who, following the death of Elizabeth I, became King James I of England in 1603.

The King’s Book

Scottish Parliament had criminalized witchcraft in 1563, just before James’s birth. The act made being a witch a capital offense. Nearly three decades passed before the first major witchcraft panic arose in 1590, when King James came to believe that he and his Danish bride, Anne, had been personally targeted by witches who conjured dangerous storms to try to kill the royals during their voyages across the North Sea.

One of the first accused in this panic was a woman named Geillis Duncan, from Tranent in East Lothian. In late 1590 her employer, David Seton, accused her and tortured her into a confession in which she named several accomplices. Duncan later retracted her confession, but by then the panic was well under way.

King James sanctioned witch trials after an alarming confession in 1591 from an accused witch, Agnes Sampson. It was revealed that 200 witches—even some from Denmark—had sailed in sieves to the church of the coastal town of North Berwick on Halloween night in 1590. There the devil preached to them and

ROYAL HANDBOOK

In 1597 King James VI outlined his theories of black magic in *Daemonologie* (below). When James took the English throne in 1603, the book was republished in England.

BRITISH LIBRARY/ALBUM





encouraged them to plot the king's destruction. After hearing these confessions, even though they had been extorted by torture, King James and his advisers came to believe a witchcraft conspiracy threatened his reign. It must have been alarming, but also gratifying, to have the devil allegedly say that the king was his greatest enemy on earth.

Geillis Duncan and Agnes Sampson were two of many put to death during the first great panic. Although it cannot be said with certainty how many suspected witches were executed during the North Berwick trials, more than a hundred people were implicated.

Six years later another panic broke out. Once again, witches were reported to be conspiring against King James personally. A woman named Margaret Aitken, the so-called great witch of Balwearie, claimed a special power to detect other witches, many of whom were put to death on her word alone. This panic halted abruptly when Aitken was exposed as a fraud. This incident embarrassed

RIDING WITH THE DEVIL

The woodcut below, from the 1493 *Nuremberg Chronicle*, shows the devil and a witch. The idea of demonic witchcraft arose in the 15th century.

AKG/ALBUM



witch-hunters greatly, and that same year, partly to justify the recent trials, King James published his treatise, *Daemonologie*. Witchcraft attracted scholarly interest in the 16th century, and the king's book reflects how James saw himself as an intellectual.

Daemonologie explains the way the devil operated in the world. He was the leader of fallen angels, who had become demons. These demons made pacts with people and granted them powers to work harmful magic. According to James's book, therefore, witchcraft was a secret conspiracy between humans and demons, who were out to do all the harm they could. Against this conspiracy, the faithful's only hope was to appeal to God—and especially to the God-given powers of kings like James.

Later political events shifted witch-hunting away from the central place in James's worldview of his role as a divinely ordained king. After James succeeded Queen Elizabeth I as sovereign of England in 1603, he faced a new religious



SEAT OF POWER

Agnes Sampson, one of the accused witches from North Berwick, was questioned by King James at Holyroodhouse in Edinburgh, the seat of Scottish royalty for centuries.

DEA/ALBUM



BRIDGEMAN/ACI

THE REALM OF JAMES VI

THIS MAP of the British Isles was produced in 1595, four years after the North Berwick witch trials. The southern part of Scotland, near Edinburgh, was the area most affected by the witch panics of the 16th and 17th centuries. More isolated areas of the Scottish Highlands, to the north and west, saw fewer cases. In 1603 James acceded to the throne of England as James I and united the crowns.

opponent: militant Catholics. Catholic conspiracies threatened his claim on the English throne, in much the same way the North Berwick witches threatened him in Scotland. After the Gunpowder Plot of 1605—Guy Fawkes’s plan to blow up Parliament and kill the king—James turned away from hunting witches in favor of rooting out any Catholic conspiracies.

From Royal to Local

Even though King James’s attentions had shifted, ideas about witchcraft had permeated Scottish society. The notion of witches as a demonic conspiracy descended through the lower levels of local government, making the witch hunts of the 17th century local as well as national affairs.

There was a geographical pattern that shows the state’s interest in rooting out witches: Heavy witch-hunting took place in areas near the centers of state power, such as Fife and Lothian. Fear of the devil was at its peak when the state was determined to enforce religious uniformity.

More than half of all Scottish witch-hunting

took place during brief but intense periods of panic. In one locality after another, the authorities uncovered evidence of apparent witch conspiracies. Outside the panic periods, by contrast, there were a trickle of cases.

Most practical measures to weed out witches were taken by the local leaders of Scottish society, the lairds (local aristocrats) and ministers. They formed kirk sessions (parish committees of the church) to supervise the people and to bring them to godliness. Kirk sessions were not criminal courts, but they could arrest and interrogate suspects and pass cases on to the secular authorities. Most offenses that kirk sessions dealt with concerned extramarital sex, which may explain why so many Scottish female witches were accused of sex with the devil.

While many of these incidents began locally, some panics in Scotland had origins overseas. The third nationwide panic began in 1628 and probably spread to Scotland from Germany, which also experienced a huge upsurge of witch-hunting in the late 1620s at the time of the Thirty Years’ War.



KING JAMES VI OF SCOTLAND (SEATED, RIGHT) SUPERVISING THE TORTURE OF WITCHES IN EDINBURGH. DETAIL OF A WOODCUT FROM THE 1591 PAMPHLET *NEWES FROM SCOTLAND*
CHARLES WALKER COLLECTION/ALAMY/CORDON PRESS

Tempests, Cauldrons, and Chaos

THE 1591 PAMPHLET *Newes From Scotland* reported episodes to English audiences from the witchcraft panic taking place in North Berwick, near Edinburgh, Scotland. It recorded the cases against Geillis Duncan, Agnes Sampson, and John Fian, who were charged by Scottish authorities with the use of witchcraft. Along with text, it featured several distinctive woodcut illustrations that depicted scenes from their confessions, extracted under torture: ① A ship wrecks on the Scottish coast, owing to the spells cast by the witches, most likely an allusion to the foul weather encountered by the king and his queen while sailing on the North Sea. None of the royal ships were sunk, however. On land, ② several witches gather around a cauldron, while another group listens to ③ the devil, as ④ John Fian, a schoolmaster, takes notes. Fian—also known as Cunningham—would be one of the central figures in the trial of the North Berwick witches, in the course of which he was brutally tortured. The pamphlet also tells the story of ⑤ a peddler's encounter with witches who magically transported him to a wine cellar in Bordeaux, France.

A WOODCUT FROM THE 1591 PAMPHLET *NEWES FROM SCOTLAND*, PROBABLY WRITTEN BY JAMES CARMICHAEL, WHO LATER AIDED JAMES IN THE WRITING OF HIS BOOK *DAEMONOLOGIE*

BRIDGEMAN/ACI





2

5

SCOTS

Discovery of VVitchcraft:

PROVING

The common opinions of Witches contracting with Divels, Spirits, or Familiars; and their power to kill, torment, and consume the bodies of men women, and children, or other creatures by diseases or otherwise; their flying in the Air, &c. To be but imaginary Erronious conceptions and novelties;

WHEREIN ALSO,

The lewde unchristian practises of Witchmongers, upon aged, melancholy, ignorant, and superstitious people in extorting confessions, by inhumane terrors and tortures is notably detected.

ALSO

The knavery and confederacy of Conjurors.
The impious blasphemy of Inchanters.
The imposture of Soothsayers, and Infidelity of Atheists.
The delusion of Pythonists, Figure-casters, Astrologers, and vanity of Dreamers.
The fruitlesse beggerly art of Alchimystry.
The horrible art of Poisoning and all the tricks and conveyances of juggling and Liegerdmain are fully deciphered.

With many other things opened that have long lain hidden: though very necessary to be known for the undeceiving of Judges, Justices, and Juries, and for the preservation of poor, aged, deformed, ignorant people; frequently taken, arraigned, condemned and executed for Witches, when according to a right understanding, and a good conscience, Physick, Food, and necessaries should be administred to them.

Whereunto is added, a treatise upon the nature, and substance of Spirits and Divels, &c. all written and published in Anno 1584. by Reginald Scot, Esquire.

LONDON,
Printed by Richard Cotes. 1651.

WELLCOME COLLECTION

The Case Against Witchcraft

NOT EVERYONE in the 16th and 17th centuries believed witches to be a real threat to society. In 1584, the decade before the first major Scottish witch panic took place, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* was written by Reginald Scot from the county of Kent in southern England. Scot argued that many of

the "proofs" of witchcraft were merely superstitions incompatible with Protestant belief. Scot considered those who had been accused of witchcraft to be innocent. He denied that the devil had power to affect the physical world, and offered natural explanations for phenomena thought to be supernatural.

So-called witches, Scot argued, were really harmless old women. King James VI published his book *Daemonologie* in 1597 partly as a riposte to Scot. Scot's book remained influential well after its publication, and new editions were published in 1651 (the edition shown above), 1654, and 1665.



"EXAMINATION OF A WITCH," 1853 PAINTING BY T.H. MATTESON. PEABODY ESSEX MUSEUM, SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS
BRIDGEMAN/ACI

PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

SUSPECTED WITCHES were tried by local courts, but some were sent to Edinburgh for trial. Before trial, evidence was gathered in the locality. Some suspects were pricked to find the "devil's mark"—a lesion supposedly made by contact with the devil when sealing his pact with a witch. These spots could be mere scars, moles, cysts, or skin tags. Witch-hunters believed pricking them would inflict no pain on the accused, but in practice it was coercive and humiliating, and sometimes induced suspects to confess. Panics could escalate when one suspect was asked about other witches; they could then be hauled in and interrogated in their turn. Across many European cultures, searching for a devil's mark was a common practice. It was even used by Salem witch-hunters in 1692 in the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

The effect of such panics would have been felt at the most local level: In western Scotland, in the parish church of Dundonald, for example, on November 8, 1629, "the minister publicly out of the pulpit . . . did inhibit and discharge all sorts of charming, and resorting to charmers, consulting with wizards, sorcerers, and others of that sort, certifying all and sundry who did so in time coming, they should be . . . prosecuted with death, as for the crimes of witchcraft."

The Accused

The main stereotype of an accused witch was an elderly, quarrelsome female. Often the initial suspects in a panic would be individuals whose neighbors complained of their harmful magic. Once the initial suspects were pressed to name accomplices, however, the latter were accused less of harmful magic and more of having made a pact with the devil. For women, this usually included a sexual relationship with the male devil. The few accusations against men omitted the sexual element. A man had to do something quite specific and rare in order to be charged

with witchcraft. As a result, 85 percent of the convicted witches were women.

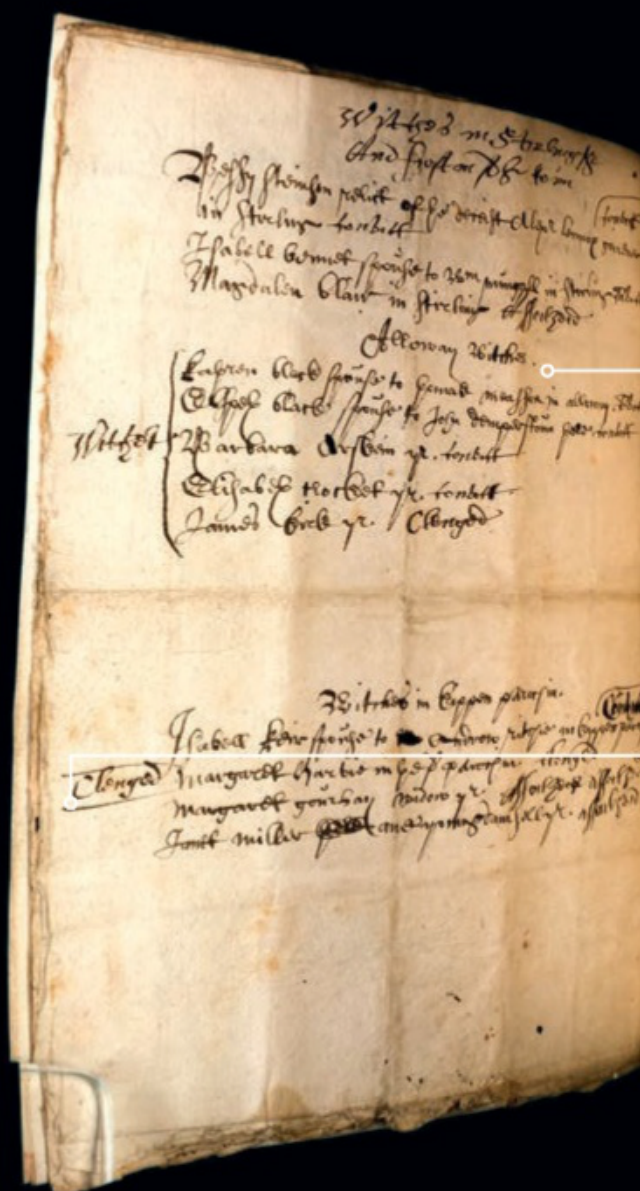
Quarrels were often a source of accusations. Sometimes, villagers did indeed curse their neighbors during a feud, but usually people sought reconciliations. Confessions and neighbors' testimonies reveal much about quarrels and curses. Katherine Craigie, tried in Orkney in 1640, told her neighbor, who was unwell, "that I prayed ill for you, and now I see that prayer hath taken effect." Peasants usually did not want their local witches executed. Even so, they didn't object when the authorities executed them.

Scottish witch-hunting was partly about local quarrels and partly about the elite's fear of the devil, but some of it was also about magical fantasy. Some people really believed that they could cast spells. However, these spells were generally benevolent. Marion Grant, in Aberdeenshire in 1597, cured sick cattle by casting south-running water on them in the name of the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost, and "Christsonday," the name of an angel in folk belief. The interrogators thought that Christsonday was really the devil,

Official Records

"NAMES OF THE WITCHES 1658" is a carefully compiled list of 114 people accused of witchcraft in the panic that started that year. The manuscript is held at the Wellcome Library in London and has recently been digitized, giving more people access to its contents. The 1658 list covers counties in southwestern and central Scotland, which seem to have been grouped together for a regional court. The travel-stained document was probably used by an official messenger who went from parish to parish to summon juries of local men for the forthcoming trials. In some of the parishes he visited, the messenger also collected evidence against the accused. The 1658 document is one of several useful digitized resources for researching Scotland's witch hunts. The University of Edinburgh's Survey of Scottish Witchcraft website features an extensive database of all the currently known names of accused witches.

WELLCOME LIBRARY



The document was written by several hands, making it difficult for a layperson to decipher. Names are often written in nonstandard forms.

The list is organized by parishes. In this parish (Alloa in Clackmannanshire), five names are listed—four women and one man: Katherine Black, Elizabeth Black, Barbara Erskine, Elspeth Crockett, and James Kirk.

The list was annotated after several trials to note the verdicts. One woman, Margaret Harvie, was "clanged" (cleansed), which meant that she was acquitted. Most witchcraft trials ended in conviction and execution, but not all.

showing the culture gap between the common folk and the elite.

Confessions Through Torture

Witch-hunters unwittingly created evidence through torture. Panics were created and fueled by torturing suspects and then asking them to name their accomplices. The people thus named could be arrested and made to confess to a pact with the devil. Some confessions also included fantastical elements and told of bizarre experiences. The 1644 trial of Margaret Watson recorded the following startling details:

"Thou hast confessed that . . . thou and the rest of the witches dug up corpses of deceased persons, from whom you took members to accomplish your Devilish designs; at your meetings you blasphemed God's name and you used to drink and dance;

CONSUMED BY FIRE

Burning witches alive (below) was common in Germany and other parts of Europe, but in Scotland the convicted were usually strangled before their bodies were burned.

AKG/ALBUM

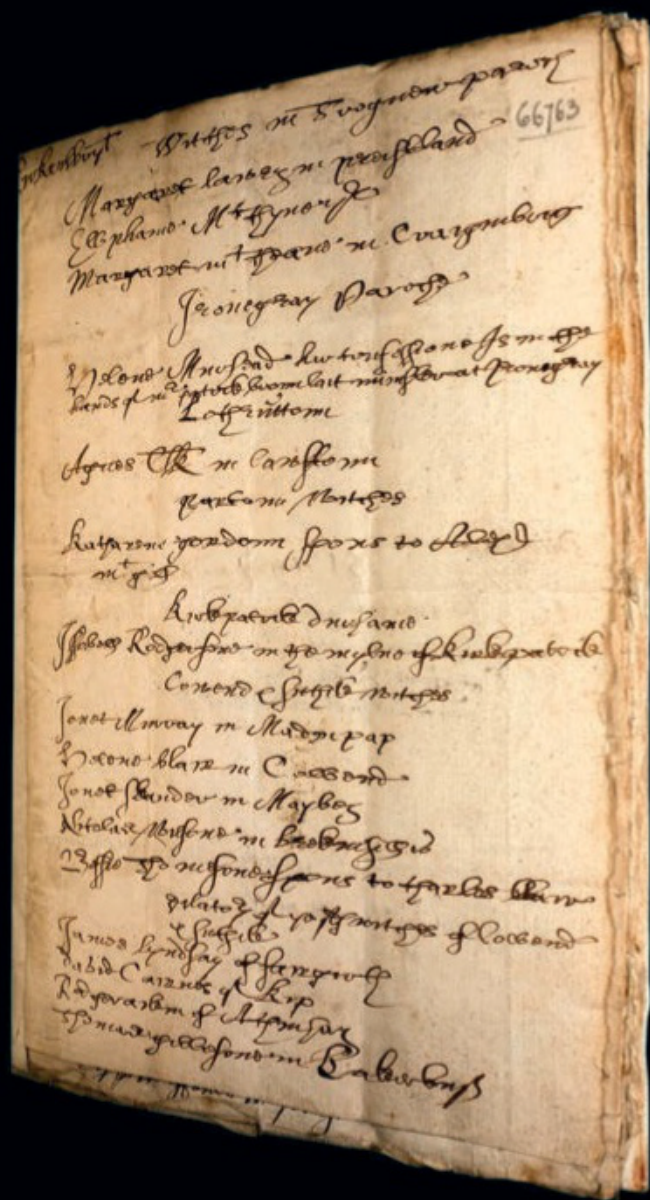


Mallie Paterson rode upon a cat, Janet Lockie rode upon a cock, thy aunt Margaret Watson rode upon a hawthorn tree, thou thyself rode upon a bundle of straw, and Jean Lachlan rode upon an elder tree."

Sleep deprivation was the most common method of torture. After about three days without sleep, not only would a suspect lose the ability to resist their questioners, but they would also start to hallucinate, leading to many

confessions that included exotic details like sailing in sieves. These are not sober accounts of real activities; they are fantasies concocted by confused, despairing, and terrified people, searching desperately for the answers that would satisfy their interrogators.

There was no need for such suspects to be convicted of harmful magic if a



GEOFFREY DAVIES/ALAMY/ACI

MONUMENTAL MYSTERY

NEAR THE VILLAGE OF DUNNING in southern Scotland stands a stone monument, bearing the words, “Maggie Wall burnt here 1657 as a witch.” There are no records of a woman named Maggie Wall being executed during Dunning’s witch trials in the 1600s. Researchers believe this cairn was built later, in the 18th or 19th century. Since then, it has become an unofficial memorial to the thousands killed during Scotland’s witch hunts.

pact with the devil could be proved by a confession. Because of the perceived societal threat posed by the devil, the courts accepted flimsy evidence. In Scotland convicted witches were burned, as in most European countries. Rather than being burned alive, however, it was the custom in Scotland to strangle suspected witches at the stake first.

Panics Die Down

In the late 17th century religious pluralism became more acceptable. New scientific ideas undermined the dogmatic certainty about witchcraft. Courts refused to accept confessions that might have been extorted by torture. Witch-hunting became less vital to the state, and there were no more national panics after 1662.

Local panics still flared up for another half century or so. Scotland’s unique case of vigilante justice occurred in the small fishing town of Pittenweem in the early 1700s. This late episode illustrates what might happen when the populace had been persuaded to fear witches, but the authorities were no longer willing to

execute them. Four of the Pittenweem suspects confessed to witchcraft, but then they retracted their confessions. The central authorities in Edinburgh refused to allow a trial, and the suspects had to be released. However, on January 30, 1705, a crowd killed one of the accused women, Janet Cornfoot, by dragging her to the beach, placing a door on top of her, and piling stones onto the door until she died.

For all the gruesomeness of its mob justice, the Pittenweem case would be among Scotland’s last witch panics. The last execution of all took place in Dornoch in 1727, and in 1736, the British Parliament repealed the 1563 witchcraft statute. Since then some small monuments have been erected to the victims of witch panics in Scotland, but there are calls for a larger, more formal monument to recognize the great injustice perpetrated against the thousands of innocent women and men tortured and killed during the great panics of four centuries ago. ■

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KING HEREAFTER

KNOWN AS THE SCOTTISH PLAY, *Macbeth* was written by William Shakespeare three years after James became king of England. *Macbeth* is a tragedy about a Scottish nobleman's rise and fall. After witches—also called the three weird sisters—tell him “thou shalt be king hereafter,” Macbeth murders King Duncan in cold blood, becomes king, and continues killing to retain his grip on power. Undone by his own ambition, he loses his wife, his friends, his reputation, and his crown before being slain.

MACBETH was a real, 11th-century Scottish king. Shakespeare got his story from the English chronicler Raphael Holinshed, who in turn got it from several Scottish chroniclers. The most important was Andrew of Wyntoun, who wrote about 1420. According to Wyntoun, Macbeth saw “three weird sisters” in a dream; they prophesied to him that he would eventually become king. “Weird” was a Scots dialect word meaning “fate,” and “weird sisters” were minor deities like the Greek Fates. Later chroniclers added “a witch” who prophesied that Macbeth would not be overthrown until Birnam Wood came to Dunsinane. Shakespeare streamlined the story by combining the “weird sisters” and the “witch.”



THE THREE WITCHES
CLASP HANDS IN A 19TH-
CENTURY ENGRAVING BY
RICHARD WESTALL.

BRIDGEMAN/ACI



The painting depicts a dramatic scene from Shakespeare's Macbeth. On the left, a dark, muscular horse stands on a rocky outcrop, its head turned towards the right. It has a golden collar and a bridle. In the center and right, three old, bearded women, the Weird Sisters, stand on a rocky outcrop. They are dressed in long, flowing robes of red and green. Their faces are pale and aged, with long white hair. They have their arms raised in the air, palms facing forward, as if casting a spell or delivering a prophecy. The background is a dark, stormy sky with swirling clouds. The overall mood is dark and ominous.

THE WEIRD SISTERS
DELIVER THEIR
CURSED PROPHECY TO
MACBETH IN THÉODORE
CHASSÉRIAU'S 1855
PAINTING INSPIRED BY
SHAKESPEARE'S PLAY.

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

Sigiriya: A Palace Fit for a Lion King

Built in the fifth century, Sri Lanka's Sigiriya fortress attracted the attention of British archaeologists in the 1800s, who were amazed by its leonine rock art and beautiful frescoes.

Perched on a slab of rock that juts dramatically over the forests of central Sri Lanka, Sigiriya is as imposing a sight now as it must have been when it was first built by a fierce king in the fifth century A.D. Meaning "lion's rock," Sigiriya (designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1982) is accessed by way of passageways cut into the rock face between a monumental pair of lion paws.

The fortress was later swallowed by the forest, and only familiar to local villagers. Outsiders used knowledge of its past, preserved in Buddhist texts, to search for the ancient site. British historians rediscovered its astonishing



buildings and frescoes in the 19th century.

Kingdom to Colony

Sigiriya was built by the fifth-century king Kashyapa I, who ruled the native Sinhalese dynasty, the Moriya. The imposing fortress was the capital of the Sinhalese kingdom until Kashyapa was defeated in A.D. 495.

After Kashyapa, dynasties rose and fell, their fortunes shaped by internal power struggles and conflicts between native Sinhalese and outside invaders from India.

Various cities held the status of capital after Sigiriya, such as Polonnaruwa. By the 12th century, however, overall control of Sri Lanka progressively weakened. Sinhalese power retreated to the southwest of the island, abandoning the Rajarata region, and the former administrative centers, including Sigiriya, started to fall into disuse.

Sri Lanka's position in the Indian Ocean made it vulnerable to Europeans looking to expand their control in the region. By the mid-1500s the Portuguese had thoroughly exploited dynastic tensions in Sri Lanka's ruling elite and controlled much of the island.

A century later the Dutch had replaced the Portuguese as colonial masters, and they were in turn displaced by the British in the late 1700s. By 1815 the Kingdom of Kandy,

the last independent, native state on the island, became part of the British Empire.

Knowledge is Power

British imperial rule brought civil servant George



JUNGLE swathes the eastern face of the Sigiriya rock, topped with the citadel built by King Kashyapa I in the late fifth century A.D. in central Sri Lanka.

PHILIPPE MICHEL/AGE FOTOSTOCK



13th century

A Buddhist monk writes the *Culavamsa* chronicle describing the building of Sigiriya by the fifth-century king Kashyapa I.

1820s

Colonization of Ceylon prompts British interest in its ancient sites. George Turnour translates the *Mahavamsa*.

1831

Inspired by references to Sigiriya in the *Culavamsa*, Maj. Jonathan Forbes is the first European to visit Sigiriya.

1890s

The first comprehensive survey of Sigiriya is undertaken by Harry Bell on behalf of the British authorities.

THE 40-FOOT-HIGH AVUKANA BUDDHA IN SRI LANKA WAS CARVED IN THE FIFTH CENTURY, THE SAME PERIOD IN WHICH NEARBY SIGIRIYA WAS BUILT.

HERITAGE/SCALA, FLORENCE



Turnour to the island. An aristocrat, scholar, and passionate historian, Turnour worked with a Buddhist monk to translate an ancient fifth-century chronicle, the *Mahavamsa*, from the Sri Lankan Pali language into English. Based on this and other texts, he identified two ancient capitals: Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa.

Turnour also studied a later chronicle of Sri Lankan history, the *Culavamsa*, which told the story of

King Kashyapa. In the late fifth century, this Sinhalese prince killed his father, King Dhatusena, and seized the throne, usurping his brother, who fled to India. Fearing reprisals, he built the fortress Sigiriya—but in vain: His brother returned, defeating Kashyapa, and Sigiriya lost its brief status as capital.

In 1827 a Scottish officer, Jonathan Forbes, became friends with Turnour, and on hearing the story of
(continued on page 94)

THE LION PEOPLE

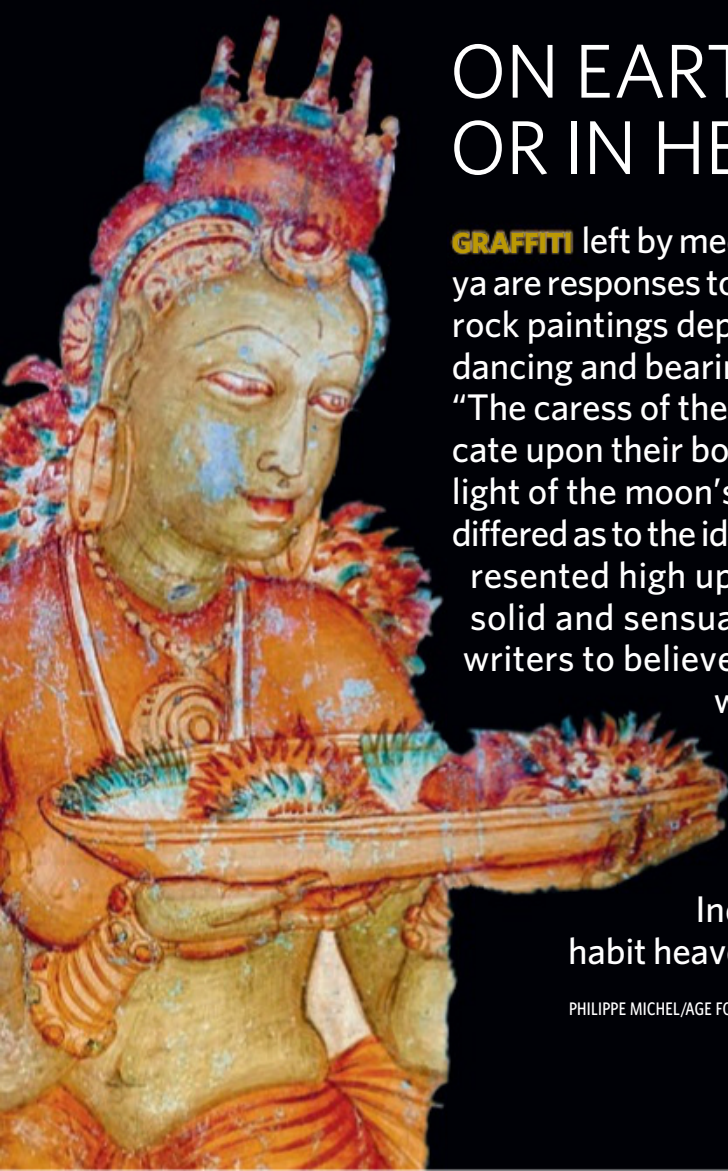
THE MAHAVAMSA, a fifth-century Sri Lankan epic, tells how the Indian prince Vijaya was the grandson of a lion. He traveled to the island of Sri Lanka and married Princess Kuveni. From their union was born the Sinhalese race (*sinhala* means “of lions”). In the Sinhalese tradition, the lion is the mythical ancestor of kings and a symbol of royal authority. The photograph shows what remains of the monumental Lion Paws Gate at Sigiriya.



SUPERSTOCK/AGE FOTOSTOCK



JOSÉ RAGAVAGE / FOTOSTOCK



ON EARTH OR IN HEAVEN?

GRAFFITI left by medieval travelers to Sigiriya are responses to the site's extraordinary rock paintings depicting beautiful women dancing and bearing offerings. One notes: "The caress of the gentle breeze was delicate upon their bodies, illuminated by the light of the moon's rays." Historians have differed as to the identity of the women represented high up on the cliff wall. Their solid and sensual forms have led some writers to believe they are depictions of women from Kashyapa's harem. Another theory believes them to be depictions of *apsaras*, singers and dancers in Indian mythology who inhabit heaven.

PHILIPPE MICHEL/AGE FOTOSTOCK



THE WOMEN depicted in the Sigiriya frescoes are only painted from the hips up, with the lower parts of their bodies wrapped by clouds. This has led some historians to suggest that they represent divine rather than earthly beings.

DEA/SCALA, FLORENCE

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Royal Water Features

SIGIRIYA fuses function and design. The need for fresh water and the desire for beauty were married in the elaborate symmetrical design for Kashyapa's royal gardens. The largest of the ponds are laid out on the western esplanade (right). An elaborate system of terraces also holds small gardens at the foot of the rock (below).



DEA/AGE FOTOSTOCK



THE DESIGN of the garden on the western esplanade at Sigiriya contrasts rigid rectilinear lines with the rounded natural forms of the surrounding greenery.

ROBERT HARDING/AGE FOTOSTOCK

(continued from page 91)

Kashyapa and his palace, decided to look for it. In 1831 he set off to where locals told him he would find the remains of an ancient city.

His memoir, *Eleven Years in Ceylon*, describes “the rock of Sirigi [sic], ... frowning defiance over the scanty fields and the far-extending forest of the surrounding plain.” As he approached, he could see platforms and galleries carved into the rock. Two of his party managed to scramble some way up but dislodged rocks, “which crashed among the boughs of the trees at a great depth below.”

Unsure as to whether he had found the Sigiriya mentioned in the Buddhist texts, Forbes abandoned the expedition. Revisiting a few years later, he traced the moat that surrounds the gardens at the foot of the rock but did not attempt to climb the cliff face. He doubted that the name Sigiriya was related to lions, as he had seen nothing to support that etymology.

Fabulous Frescoes

British mountaineers eventually reached the top in 1851, but the task of surveying the site fell to the Archaeological Commissioner of Ceylon,

Harry C.P. Bell. His survey at the end of the 19th century has formed the basis of all studies since.

Bell painstakingly ascertained the layout of Kashyapa's fantastical city as well as detailed the magnificent carving of the lion's paws at the entrance, which Forbes had not been able to see.

In addition to the elaborate water gardens at the foot of the rock, Bell's survey also lavished attention on the galleries on the rock face. These are decorated with exquisite wall paintings that have become some of the most prized objects in Sri Lanka's artistic heritage. A

total of 21 surviving frescoes may depict *apsaras*, celestial singers and dancers.

Nearby, also on the walls of the rock face, are well over 1,000 items of graffiti, scratched by monks and pilgrims who visited the site in the eighth to the 13th centuries. These messages from the past can cause a frisson when read by visitors today. One reads: “At Sigiriya, of abundant splendor, situated on the island of [Sri Lanka] we saw, in happy mood, the rock that captivates the mind of all people who come here.”

—Verónica Walker

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Next Issue

RICH SCULPTURE ADORNS THE ROMANESQUE PORTICO OF THE MONASTERY OF SANTA MARÍA OF RIPOLL IN NORTHEASTERN SPAIN.

TONI VILCHES/AGE FOTOSTOCK

ROMANESQUE REVOLUTION

CHRISTENDOM “is cladding itself in a white mantle of churches,” observed a French monk in the 11th century, noting how French, Spanish, and Italian towns were building magnificent cathedrals, abbeys, and monasteries in a new, splendid style. Inspired by the splendor of Rome’s great past, Romanesque architecture featured sturdy walls, rounded arches, and tall columns. Buildings conveyed strength and stability as the Holy Roman Empire arose, the church grew powerful, and the era of the Crusades began.

THE LAST AMERICAN SLAVE SHIP

IN MAY 2019 National Geographic announced the discovery of the wreckage of the schooner *Clotilda*, the last known ship to bring enslaved Africans to the United States. The international slave trade had been outlawed since 1808, but proslavery forces had been railing against the law for decades, even resorting to illegal human trafficking to bring in more enslaved people. In 1860 Timothy Meaher, a wealthy Mobile landowner and shipbuilder, smuggled more than 100 Africans from present-day Benin to Alabama aboard the *Clotilda*, which was burned to the waterline by Captain William Foster after the voyage was complete. The shipwreck lay hidden in the waters of the Mobile River for more than a century.

The Mummy Trade

Desired for practical purposes, Egyptian mummies were a big business for European merchants by the 16th century. Apothecaries sought them for medicinal use, while artists wanted to grind them up into paint. European scholarly demand for mummies only began to rise in the 19th century.

Mother to the Great

A wife of Philip II of Macedon, Olympias was mother of his son, the future Alexander the Great. Often depicted by ancient historians as ruthless and cruel, Olympias used her wits and ambition to gain the throne for her son.

Rome’s Model Citizens

In ancient Rome, being a citizen meant something. *Civitas* entitled people to participation in public life, protection of their rights, and the pleasure of privilege. As Rome expanded, questions of who could be a citizen provoked conflict as more people sought to claim Roman citizenship for themselves.

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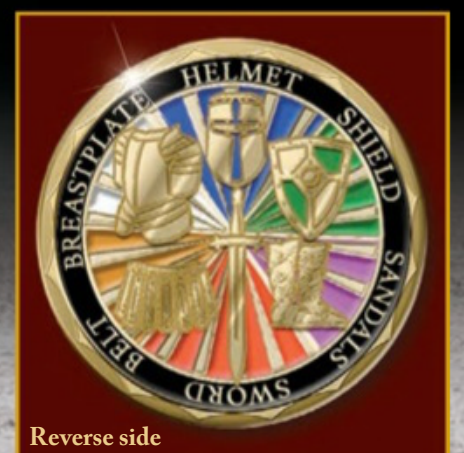
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